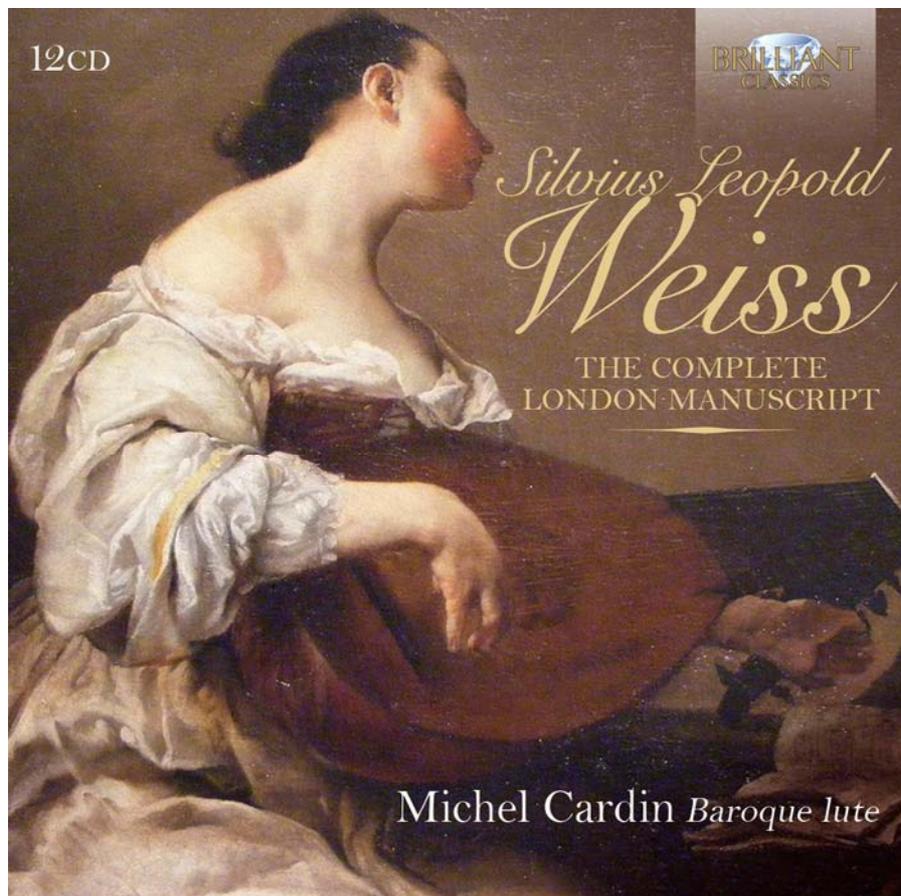


***Silvius Leopold Weiss***

**The Complete London Manuscript**

***Extensive Liner Notes***



# The London Manuscript unveiled

## 12 Analysis Conclusions

By Michel Cardin ©2005, updated 2014

1. [Analysis Conclusions](#)
2. General Context
3. Description of the works
4. Appendix 1 : The late Baroque lute seen through S.L.Weiss
5. Appendix 2 : Ornamentation and examples
6. Appendix 3 : The slur concept in the late Baroque tablatures

The ideas that were developing during my twelve-year artistic and musicological project devoted to the London Manuscript by Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750) brought me to the following conclusions that I could put up on historical and practical verifications. My hope is that these few precisions will bring observers a bit closer to the original intentions. Other musicians and analysts are of course working to find more details of interpretation. My thanks go to the persons who nourished my research by their important discoveries: Douglas Alton Smith, Tim Crawford, Markus Lutz, Frank Legl, Claire Madl, and many others that I cannot mention here. The 12 topics presented below are a synthesis of the most important aspects described in a broader context of tonalities, sources, technical and aesthetical implications in my *General context* and *Description of the works* articles. The points here summarised are:

1. Unity and chronology
2. Quality of the works, importance of basses and ornamentation
3. Musical care and editorial negligence
4. Pieces replaced in their context
5. Other composers' works and dubious works
6. Instrumental polyvalence
7. Works for the non-theorbated lute
8. The added preludes
9. Two categories of minuets and bourrees
10. The two repetition signs' question
11. The slur question
12. Ensemble music

### [1. Unity and chronology](#)

There is no possible real chronology for the London Ms yet, but Tim Crawford has methodically encircled the general dates of composition in relation with the Weiss visits to Prague (See the *Lute Society of America Journal* of 2000). In the manuscript, the first dated pieces are indicated 1717 and the last one 1724.

Meanwhile, music itself reveals a concern for unity in setting this big volume. The Allemande of the last solo sonata no 26 (*WeissSW 32*) (we will refer to the works according to the current *Weiss Sämtliche Werke*) is exactly in the same form as the one of the first sonata *WeissSW 1*. This is also true for all the movements of both sonatas, especially the Courante, with its same style, same construction, same voice interplay, rhythms and harmonic patterns as in the first sonata. Moreover, one realises that there is the same style of composition and same tonality at the beginning (sonata no 1 *WeissSW 1*), the middle (sonata no 14 *WeissSW 19*) and at the end of the manuscript (sonatas 25 *WeissSW 31*, and 26 *WeissSW 32*). One can feel with this organisation the author's preoccupation for a homogenous whole, representative of his first grand period of composition even though some works already contain the wit found in the last large sonatas (the 14 late-ones among the 20 original sonatas of the Dresden Manuscript). This preoccupation for unity is such that the opening measure of the last sonata is the same as the one of the Allemande of the first sonata. In addition, one can remark easily that the allemandes of these four sonatas in F really have a 'family likeness'.

As for unity of movements within a sonata, it is most of the time rather easy to find it, thanks to similar ascending-descending melodic formulae, recognizable thematic cells, well balanced complementary harmonies. This refutes the idea that any sonata movement can replace another one of same tonality and that we can reconstruct sonatas at will. Of course, this is a possible proceeding in itself since Weiss himself did it sometimes from a manuscript to another. Nevertheless, one must not forget that he did it knowing all the implications, and that we are not Weiss and that we are breaking framings that are set as they are. It is not possible anymore to use the old wrong argument of so called 'uneven quality' justifying such mangling. We know now indeed how regularly dazzling is the quality of this manuscript from beginning to end. Can we imagine any pianist playing a Beethoven sonata in concert and replacing one or two of its movements by others from other sonatas?

## [2. Quality of the works, importance of basses and ornamentation](#)

As a matter of fact, it would seem that decisions of an editorial nature concerning the content of this important book of music have been proven to be judicious. Contrary to the views of some, all of the works contained in this manuscript are of great value and worthy of inclusion in any series of recordings or concert program. Weiss's qualities are seen of course in the original sound effects, the surprising pedals, dramatic suspensions, long elaborated phrases, daring modulations, as well as technical advancements like the 'faked slur' on two strings (well before Tarrega), the active use of the *a* finger, sonic superpositions containing hidden harmonies, etc. However, in order to really understand the scope of this originality, one must take in consideration two important elements: the apleness of the basses, which implies a complex sonic richness, difficult in its control, and the non-written implicit ornamentation.

Weiss belongs to those composers who need this double implication from the player in order to have their music presented at their right value, 1) the 'full sonority' or 'sonority without compromise', and 2) the 'active ornamentation'. Sonority must indeed be first worked out almost at an orchestral level, which induces two precise difficulties called the overlegato and the bass dampening, and secondly enriched with not only scattered simple mordents or little arpeggios. One must reinvent the musical phrase at the reprises; this is, in my opinion, an interpreter duty. It means a real personal intervention in the creative process, without which the music seems to be of medium interest. Weiss was anticipating this kind of collaboration from the performers (at least from those he accepted as such) as much as, I am sure, their technical capacities.

## [3. Musical care and editorial negligence](#)

The recent discovery of the owner of the manuscript, the Count Johann Christian Anthoni von Adlersfeld of Prague, helps us understand why the London Ms is in the same time a careful *and* imperfect compilation. Adlersfeld was more a collector than a lutenist and he probably did not care for a precise classification. Wanting nonetheless to keep this exclusive treasure among his collections to be left to inheritance, he was giving Weiss the motivation to hand down to posterity a long lasting artistic production. This care for details seen from beginning to end supports the thesis that the manuscript was meticulously revised by an author who viewed the individual pieces as part of a unified whole, but was not intended to publication. This would explain the contradiction between the musical perfection and the disregard for titles, minute chronology (specific dates are provided for only a few pieces and sonatas) and precise separations between the works. This strong dichotomy should help us in the end, and contrarily to our first beliefs, to seriously consider the London Manuscript as generally being *musically* the most reliable document in a comparative study of sources.

## [4. Pieces replaced in their context](#)

With regular practice, one realises that some pieces cannot be classified like Smith did. The Bourrée p.299 is not a Bourrée II of the previous sonata since it is impossible to link each other not only because of lack of thematic association, but also because of their different speeds and mostly their different harmonic density (see below about minuets and bourrees). Contrarily to this, *La belle Tyroloise* is in fact a second Rigaudon of solo sonata no 21 *WeissSW 27*. I don't agree either on the three so-called too many movements of the *Divertimento à solo*. On the contrary, they actually form pairs with their respective counterparts, with conscious complementarities of themes and developments, whatever they were composed at different times or not, giving a perfectly well balanced work, not a work with too many movements.

Another better balanced work is, in my opinion, the capriccio in D if we operate a fusion with the two existing sources, Warsaw lacking the grand cadenza and London lacking the long central development, each entity being justified by the presence of the other one. We can also remark that the courante of solo sonata no 6 *WeissSW 10* is present in Dresden too, although this concordance is not mentioned by Smith, probably because when counting measures, one source having two more, he thought they were different pieces (these are actually two repeated measures). The minuet p.242 is likewise to be put back in its sonata, the solo no 26 *WeissSW 32* (see Dresden). Now concerning the four C major pieces and the four D major pieces near the end of the manuscript, I wouldn't say they absolutely need a sonata number, but they should be considered as potentially identifiable as sonatas, giving almost the impression that London has 34 rather than 32 sonatas.

I would even say 33 rather than 31, sonata *WeissSW 4* being a special case. Instrumental practice has inevitable logics exigencies, and I am simply not to make up my mind to consider these pieces as a full London sonata. Conversely, this helps to see them as such in Dresden! If performers name it as a complete one in London, they have to refute it in Dresden since a compilation, a recording or a public performance, do not allow to play the same work twice, and what would be left for Dresden would be scraps, although this is the real complete version! There are too many differences between the two sources. We would have to break an entirety and enlarge too much a small version. They are concordant, yes, but not enough, in my honest opinion, to give the same sonata number for both.

Let's not forget that the *Praelude* p.290 in E flat is actually a prelude and fugue, this giving a number of three fugues in all for the manuscript.

## [5. Other composers' works and dubious works](#)

The general attitude of lutenists and analysts so far was to think that if a piece of the London manuscript was not in the mould of the typical pieces having some stature, if it was rather light in structure, repetitive in motifs, had incongruous harmonies, etc., it was common statement to say that the piece was probably not by Weiss. If we play one by one and with real commitment the 237 pieces of the manuscript, this impression falls off pretty much because of one good reason: very many of these discrepancies are as present in the 'assuredly by Weiss' pieces as in these suspect pieces, but they are only less visible at first reading. A good example of this incomplete analysis can be seen in a piece like *Comment Sçavez-Vous?* Visible indications bring doubts, like the fact that it was

added later in the manuscript. Nevertheless, musically and technically, it contains no more strange phrases, harmonies or finger positioning than in the very similar Angloise in the same key of the sonata *WeissSW 18*. But nobody has doubts about the authenticity of this Angloise because its first appearance conforms to most of the surrounding pieces. We could mention other pieces, even some in Weiss's own autograph, and say they could be dubious according to the same principles of atypical writing observed superficially. Look at the bourree of the same sonata *WeissSW 18*, or at the courante of sonata no 2 *WeissSW 2*.

The importance of these suspect details is strongly minimized when they are seen within a complete evaluation of the piece and explained by the general structure within a controlled application of artistic originality. In fact, solidity and homogeneity of structures, in short of the musical language, have a strong psychological importance in evaluating the music when playing the works with equal artistic implication, and if one is to have doubts, it is not enough to consider only what looks like writing weaknesses or discrepancies. One must feel while playing that the work clearly came out of the brain of a different creator. We should at least feel another phraseological world. And after getting used to all the surprises of all compositions of Weiss, in parallel with a general recognizable discourse, I saw practically but a great homogenous and constant Weiss, except for, we'll see in a minute, two or three cases. When I play the works of Baron or Kropfgans, for example, I easily feel a different world, a different way of framing musical elements; there is something obvious in the difference of origin. Whereas for almost all of the dubious works of the London Ms, the music is finally too similar, peculiarities do not interfere with the well-known discourse.

In other words, I find that so far the music was much analysed on the presentation side (graphology, etc.), but not enough *stylistically* speaking. Let's take only the example of the bass treatment: with Silvius – this is different even with Sigismund – there is a kind of maximum use, not of the notes, but of the double tessitura according to the principle of *continuation* of the resonance of a bass parallelly with an intermediary voice containing the *next harmonic bass* of the musical passage, which diminishes the actual number of low basses and enhances the importance of the intermediary voices sharing unofficially but efficiently this bass character. I have not seen yet a composer use like he does this principle of 'tessitura-duration', one could say. This kind of analysis will exist one day and will take hundreds of pages. All has to be done concerning the stylistic analysis of Baroque composers/lutenists.

Two exceptions are to be mentioned: the Allegro in G p.38 and the Menuet in G p.92, which raise serious doubts. Even after studying them, one is wondering if the allegro is from somebody else, although all the weissian writing and fingering elements are present, as for example the melodic dialogues recalling the gavotte of sonata *WeissSW 27*. We would expect indeed a title such as *gavotte* or *paysanne*. The title Allegro doesn't seem to come from Weiss. Style is close but certain measures betray another hand, and the overabundant usage of the two lower courses do not 'sound' Weiss at all, rendering as they are a generally disordered sonority whereas Weiss usually uses them carefully. Suspicion is also present for the minuet p.92, even if it is difficult to state that it is not by Weiss, but suspicion because again of stylistic digressions and heavy low basses, not at all in his style. A third dubious case could be the Courante Royale, although, as a matter of fact, after a close stylistic examination, one could say that if it is not by Weiss, it is by a student or disciple who wanted to use all the idiomatic formulae of the master. Indeed, one finds again the motifs, and not only the arpeggios, of the courante of sonata *WeissSW 11*, of *Le Fameux Corsaire*, of the Allegro of sonata *WeissSW 22* and a precise motif of the Allegro of sonata *WeissSW 35* (Dresden).

Let's have a quick look at the other pieces. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Concert is clearly by Sigismund Weiss, the younger brother of Silvius. *L'Amant malheureux* is by Gallot, yet rewritten for the 13 course lute by Weiss including his personal nuances, this allowing us to say that this work is different enough from the original to be considered as being by 'Gallot-Weiss'. The Menuet p.136 could be also by Sigismund, because of both the style and the inscription *Junior Weiss* in the Warsaw version, albeit two other sources indicate Silvius Leopold as the author. For this ambiguity, two possible explanations could be 1) that Silvius has put the finishing touches to his brother's piece and included it in his repertoire, or 2) that *Junior* means Silvius in relation to his father Johann Jakob, himself a lutenist, although the style is a very late one for Silvius. The Minuet (no title there) and Trio in G p.292 is usually considered by lutenists as not being by Weiss. There is a unanimous body of opinion that claims the work either to be a composition by someone other than Weiss, or, as a best possible alternative, a duo from which the second part is missing. I admit that during my initial readings, I also found the piece to be the work of a less able hand, of limited technical prowess. Once 'in the fingers' however, one realises that the delightful ritornello is anything but monotonous and that what seems to be of simple or incomplete construction is in fact a refined, learned discourse. I now consider on the contrary that this minuet and trio is on the same level as the Loure for solo violin or lute by Bach. The spirit, I would even say the wisdom, is very close. The Gavotte in F p.13, the gavotte and double p.22 and the Bourree p.295 are also pieces to be mastered before being understood. Once this is done, we feel the familiar world and craftsmanship of Weiss. The same apply to minuets pp.92 and 303.

## 6. Instrumental polyvalence

For Baroque composers like Weiss, the solo/ensemble ambiguity supervenes frequently enough to consider that polyvalence was accepted not only as a possibility but also as a practice in its own sake, from which the musical literature takes profit as an enrichment. Accepting two or three possibilities is better life than torture oneself trying to decide whether we have exclusively a solo, a duo, a concerto, etc. Current practice was to adapt at will, according to the needs, a piece at the very time of execution, not unlike common Jazz concepts. It shows also that the performers were quite capable in improvising and ornamenting. This being said, our circumspection must remain high and refrain us from believing, even if a good proportion of the works in the London Ms is in itself adaptable, that every questionable piece must be declared 'duo' immediately. Let's review the most questionable ones:

- Solo sonatas no 12 *WeissSW 17* and 21 *WeissSW 27* are also found in the Salzburg manuscript as ensemble works. The Salzburg book is quite astonishing in that it contains 46 *Parties* and 4 *Concertos da camera* with clear numeration, all supposed to be played in trio formation since every beginning indicates *Liutho, violino è basso* (except one as a quartet with mandora). Eight of these *partitas* are by Weiss.

- Menuet in F p.11 : the first fifteen bars of this minuet are the same as those found in the minuet in B flat, from the duo sonata *WeissSW 14* in g minor (both of which exist only in the London Manuscript). Everything changes after these initial fifteen measures.

There was indeed an adaptation, followed subsequently by a new composition. But was it first a solo or duo work? With such a short passage, it is impossible to know.

- Gavotte in F p.13 : could give the impression that it is a duo, but I have my doubts. The repetition of a seemingly unique motive does not necessarily indicate any melodic lacuna, or the necessity of another voice, as witness the numerous Scarlatti sonatas thusly constructed.

- Gavotte and Double in D p.22 : as with the preceding gavotte, I find no evidence of weakness of writing, nor do I discern a hidden duo.

- Menuet in G p.92 : stands correctly as a solo although it would not come as a surprise to learn that it had also existed in a parallel duo format.

- Largo p.117 : it is not impossible to consider that this duo, a perfect insertion for the *Duo 5 WeissSW 20*, is adaptable for a solo performance, especially with the inherent ornamentation potentiality.

- Chaconne and Duo 4 in g minor *WeissSW 14* : both lutenists and guitarists have been playing this chaconne for years as a solo. Indeed, if we vary the chordal sections with arpeggios and ornamentation, the result can be very satisfactory as a solo, which brings me to reiterate the possibility of Weiss playing such versatile pieces in one format or another. If the piece were played as a solo, the *reprises* would be justified. However, it is clear that as a duo, the result is splendidly balanced. The idea that the movements preceding the chaconne could be played as solos as well is valid since they are adaptable too (the minuet whose 15 first bars are used in the solo minuet p.11 reinforces this idea) but it is clear for me that the lute writing here is for a duo concept: look at the regular alternation between melodic lines and steady chord progressions.

- Menuet in C p.180 : exists as a *Trio* of another solo minuet in Warsaw. Harmonically thin, it seems deliberately simplified. The structure strongly suggests a duo or other ensemble work, without necessarily excluding any of the charm of a solo piece.

- Menuet and Trio in G p.292 : in my opinion, this is not a duo. Please see no 4 of this text.

#### [7. Works for the non theorbated lute](#)

Nine pieces out of two hundred and thirty-seven of the London Ms need a standard lute, but this implies in reality five full sonatas (six according to the *WeissSW 4* nomenclature) if we play them entirely, since it's rather difficult to change models in the middle of a performance! Thanks to this obligation, I have made four recordings on a total of twelve CDs with a standard model (volumes 4-5-6-10), to show the sonority nuances between the two kinds of lutes. Two of these nine pieces (indicated by an asterisk) could even have their chromatic bass or phrase section taken up the octave without adversely affecting the music. These include: the overture and courante in B flat (*WeissSW4*), the allemande\* in c minor (*WeissSW 7*), the allemande and gigue in B flat (*WeissSW 15*), the prelude\* in d minor (*WeissSW 20*), the allemande and sarabande in f minor (*WeissSW 21*) and the fugue in G (*WeissSW 22*).

#### [8. The added preludes](#)

As an explanation for the addition of certain preludes in a second phase of the manuscript, Tim Crawford offers the interesting observation that if the performers didn't improvise the prelude of a sonata, they could stretch out what Weiss had quickly composed, usually within a restricted page space. Indeed Weiss's preludes often fill all in the space accorded to them, occasionally small as it may be. This suggests a spontaneous desire to give, after the fact, an example-prelude that was not included in the first phase of the compilation since it was assumed that the performer would improvise one before playing the sonata. Weiss's preludes were to serve as examples or backgrounds upon which one could embellish or elaborate musical material. This would explain the lack of concern regarding the possibility of exceeding allocated space. Thus, in a sonata without a prelude, it would be quite natural to concoct one from ideas taken from the other movements. This is a procedure that is gaining favour with contemporary lutenists and might become commonplace with future generations of performers.

#### [9. Two categories of minuets and bourrees](#)

In the long run, one realises that Weiss wrote two kinds of minuets and bourrees. I would call them the 'light-fast ones' and the 'thick moderate-speed ones'. In his compositional universe, Weiss tends to sub-categorise works of same type by their speed and sonic thickness. For example, the large Menuet (p.308) and Menuet 2 (p.309) are part of a broader group of heavier minuets that stand in opposition to the group of lighter sprightly minuets. This constant returning to three-voice texture at the conclusion of every cantabile line leads to a sonic thickening that reinforces a certain philosophical character in the work. Due to technical difficulties, it is not easy for the interpreter to allow the phrases to sing. It is not easy, but it is nevertheless very necessary because the work of Weiss is of a continuously singing quality. Inversely, the light minuets are so aerated that we must refrain from the temptation to play them even faster, like the one of sonata no 4 *WeissSW 5*, in which the soprano and bass voices joyously rebound by means of close entries.

Concerning the bourrees, an interesting comparison can be made between those in F of pages 295 (*WeissSW 31*) and 299 that have, contrarily to a first impression, simply no connection for these same reasons of fluidity and rapidity for the first one, and harmonic density for the second one. This bourree could never attain the same speed as that of sonata *WeissSW 31* due to the technical demands placed on the performer, to say nothing of a certain ridiculousness that would be the result of an attempt to play this bourree at the faster tempo. Conversely, the bourree p.295 would fall apart at the tempo of the other one. When performing many Weiss bourrees or minuets, one gets used to the logical coexistence of both styles and serenely applies them according to controlled sonority principles.

#### [10. The two repetition signs' question](#)

Firstly, the repetition dots of the last section of the Passacaille in D and the Chaconne in A raise a question. Performers are used to avoid them because the other instrumentalists traditionally never do repetitions either in their own works of the same kind. However, if they are clearly indicated, I would say that we must respect this indication because it helps tremendously to reinforce the emphasis of the last section, in which a proper *Rallentando* will assist the dramatic amplexness of the work. The conventional treatment of unrepeatable last sections should be at least revised, anyway in lute music.

Secondly, I was for a long time wondering about the repetition signs in works that are by definition non-repeatable: why are these markings there? Finally, like Robert Donington, I would give as best explanation that they meant an optional repetition. If we try indeed to think the same way an amateur did in this time, we can imagine that a fugue could be often asked as an encore by the listeners, due to the complexity of the work and the greater difficulty for the auditors to remember the themes and counter-themes. The powerful and fugitive richness of a prelude similarly solicits the brain. We could then call these 'anticipated encores', so to speak, as though the composer had agreed in advance to play the piece twice in a coming performance. This idea reminds me the Renaissance lute works that are so short in the tablature albeit we know by witnesses that they were actually very long in a recital with the help of variations and repetitions of themes.

Nevertheless, this usage is not systematic since the Prelude and fugue in E flat p.290 doesn't have those reprise signs, and sometimes two versions of a same piece are different, like the Ouverture in E flat p.34 that has an allegro with a fugal theme. The Dresden version contains repeat signs for both the introduction and the allegro, and the London version has none. Other examples: two preludes in E flat follow each other in pp.80 and 81. The first has repeat signs, the other not. And the fugue in C p.118 has them while the neighbouring fugue in d minor p.130 hasn't.

#### [11. The slur question](#)

Except for special cases, the slurs were of secondary importance to the actual notes in the 18th century lute repertoire, providing an optional, deliberately imprecise adjunct to the musical gesture, and were providing first and foremost an important contribution to the visual flow of the calligraphy. This would account for the different copying styles, with some copyists using infrequent slurring while others would garnish the manuscript with same. Still other copyists were prone to enormous calligraphic gestures that slurred only two notes while their colleagues would use the tiniest of ink curves to combine several notes, or neglect the sign positioning to the point of breaking the performance's logics in the sake of pure calligraphic elegance. This often leads to the modern habit, visually oriented as we are, of performing these slurs incorrectly, and indeed often in a manner completely at odds with the intention of the composer.

This is why one could say that modern editions of Baroque lute music, like the Peters London Ms, could have included corrections for slurs as well as for notes, rhythms, etc. Many slurs could have also been added, *especially* where they are obviously needed. Of course, this would have meant a long supplementary process, to be in hands of an active performer who must find solutions for a flowing, equilibrate playing, not a musicologist. This consciousness of interpretative necessity for slurs can be done only with a long term practice schedule and even if most of them (existing or to be added) can be easily dealt with, a good number will have to be relocated or reinvented, this with parsimony because personal taste is an inevitable part of the choice. This will bring in the future various editions with different slurring, just as for modern guitar transcriptions. And, yes, I do believe that one day new editions will put the emphasis on slurs in order to help amateurs or students, restrained as they are with continuous indecision about slurs. They read original tablatures without this remake, their playing being directly affected. This being said, as for advanced guitarists annoyed by abundant fingerings in guitar editions, these lute editions-with-precise-slurring will be of short concern for advanced lutenists, who will do their own adjustment work.

#### [12. Ensemble music](#)

A striking revelation has recently perforated the musical world: the high value of Weiss among composers. Why? Because his chamber music is played increasingly and the auditors are more impressed with it than with his solo music. And why is the solo music, in my opinion even more original than the ensemble music, didn't give such an impact? Because no or little comparison with the traditional repertoire is possible. Bach's lute music is too well known and Weiss's music, although close enough to Bach's to suscite interest, is too 'exclusively idiomatic', one could say, disconcerting as a matter of fact those who want to make comparisons. For ensemble music, comparison is on the contrary very easy. If one is not too familiar with the lute, the realm of a lute/flute duo is more captivating than a lute solo, which seems to convey mysteries that are hard to elucidate. With a duo, the musical structure is analysed beyond the individuality of instruments; kinship is immediately admitted with Bach's flute/harpsichord duos or trio sonatas for example, or with Vivaldi, Telemann, etc. The appraisal is made on solid ground and Weiss's genius comes out at once.

I thoroughly analysed the reconstructions for flute by Eileen Hadidian (Peters Edition) and two working steps were decided with flautist Christiane Laflamme: 1) to do some corrections together to nine movements rewritten by Hadidian although leaving them almost untouched. We did these slight corrections to the Hadidian lines with a view to improving the sonic balance and the musical discourse. And 2) acting as a performing musician more concerned with obtaining a closer reproduction of Weiss's lyricism than with adhering to musicological rules, I have deemed it necessary to rewrite fifteen sections myself (of a total of 24). Having played previously in detail everything else in the London Manuscript, I got some advantage, which helped me to understand the resulting sonority of the melodic/harmonic combinations of Weiss before reusing them when recomposing the flute parts.

Michel Cardin, Moncton, May 2014

## 2. General Context

- |                        |                                   |                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Presentation        | 7. Preludes                       | 12. Strange numbers |
| 2. Website             | 8. Sources                        | 13. Titles          |
| 3. Dates of composer   | 9. Nomenclature and Numberings    | 14. Smith numbers   |
| 4. Iconography         | 10. Added pieces                  | 15. Chamber music   |
| 5. Coat of arms        | 11. Versions and instrumentations | 16. References      |
| 6. Original manuscript |                                   | 17. von König       |

Here is the [presentation](#) of one of the most important volumes of music of all times for solo instrument. While not strictly musicological, the approach has been to reconcile practical aspects and matters of historical concern from the performer's perspective. In what has come to be known as the "London Manuscript", located in the British Library, we find 317 pages of tablature for Baroque Lute containing 237 pieces by Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750). These works are grouped into 26 full solo sonatas with additional material interspersed in the form of 3 preludes, 2 fugues, 1 prelude and fugue, 2 fantasias, 2 tombeaux, a caprice, an overture, a plainte, assorted minuets, gavottes, etc., in addition to five grand duos including the three concertos for lute and transverse flute of four movements each (the flute part is missing) and the two mystery sonatas with neither soprano voice nor title information (believed with a high degree of certainty to be duets). The nomenclature "London Manuscript" is used to distinguish this collection from various other Weiss folios that are housed in Dresden, Salzburg, Vienna, Moscow, Paris, etc. It should be noted that the London Manuscript, despite its extraordinary significance, is representative of less than one half of the total output of this remarkably prolific composer.

The works in the London Manuscript, although having full pagination and partial (although important) piece numbering, do not seem however at first glance to conform to any obvious formal ordering, either chronological, keywise or stylistic, but we will soon observe with a certain degree of fascination that even these aspects have been taken in consideration. (See *Description of the works*). At any rate, the document should be seen as a body of works that grew over the years, quite possibly serving as a personal memory aid for the composer, before being the same for the definitive owner, Count Johann Christian Anthony (Anthoni) von Adlersfeld of Prague.

Composed between 1706 and 1730, this massive musical oeuvre was never published during his lifetime. In fact Weiss pre-dated Paganini with his penchant for maintaining exclusive proprietorship, for him and very few friends, of his virtuoso works. Even today, some performers would not publish their compositions or arrangements. Silvius Leopold must have had a high degree of confidence in allowing such an exception, knowing likewise that Adlersfeld was not a lutenist but rather a collector wishing to keep his exclusive treasure forever. From a collector to another, the volume was undoubtedly passed from hand to hand, before being acquired for two pounds Sterling by the British Museum in 1877. In this manuscript, D. A. Smith has accurately identified six different sorts of handwriting, including that of the master (Weiss) himself. From this we can ascertain that the work was extensively revised, most notably in those pieces that were edited by the five other copyists. We now know that the pagination and the piece numbering are contemporaneous with the edition of the works. All this supports a central thesis that the manuscript was meticulously revised by an author who viewed the individual pieces as part of a unified whole, but was not intended to publication. This would explain the contradiction between the musical perfection and the disregard for titles, minute chronology (specific dates are provided for only a few pieces and sonatas) and precise separations between the works. This strong dichotomy should help us, in the end, and contrarily to our first beliefs, to seriously consider the London Manuscript as generally being *musically* the most reliable document in a comparative study of sources, as we will see in the Description of the works.

I would like to mention the trilingual Weiss [website](#) created by Laurent Duroselle and updated by Markus Lutz, in which one can find information and links, including the Weiss lute recordings Catalogue set by Peter Van Dessel : [www.slweiss.com](http://www.slweiss.com).

At this point it would be useful to make mention of a recent updating concerning the [dates of the composer](#). Thanks to research by the musicologist Frank Legl, it has been established that Weiss was born in 1687 in Grotkau, Silesia (known today as Grodkow in Poland) and not, as had been previously believed, in 1686 in Breslau (presently called Wrocław), which is 75 kilometres distant. It has also been learned that his stay in Rome, where he was a member of the Academy of the Arcadians conducted by Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, began in 1710 and not in 1708. These clarifications were provided by Luise Gottsched, who was a close friend of Weiss, in a Leipzig publication of her husband Johann Christoph Gottsched that appeared in 1760. This same publication also confirms the decisive influence of Weiss regarding the adoption of the 13-course lute as being preferable to the 11-course model. He also was influential in promoting the theorbo lute, which is an instrument that is elongated in the manner of a theorbo.

About research on [iconography](#), a fascinating painting of the Nuremberg Germanisches Nationalmuseum, *The Concert* by Johann Georg Platzer (1704-1761), receives strong attention (see Jean-Luc Bresson's article *Weiss or Questenberg?*, LSA Quarterly Volume XXXX, N°3, September 2005, which explains in detail the setting genesis of this picture), because it might include, among others, S.L.Weiss himself. However, a portrait of Johann Adam Questenberg (1685/78-1752) having been obviously copied to represent Weiss's hands, there are doubts about the character. Still who else than Weiss, the most praised musician of the Saxon court, could be placed just besides August the Strong in such a flamboyant painting? Controversy continues but the Bresson thesis of somebody being used to represent another character seems to be the best explanation, notably by his illuminating description of the engraving process at the time and the argument of the non-copied Questenberg face, contrarily to the hands.

Until recently, the origin of the [coat of arms](#) painted on the binding of the London Manuscript has remained a mystery. Thanks to research by Claire Madl, we can now ascertain that they belong to Johann Christian Anthoni von Adlersfeld, an eccentric merchant, music lover and collector from Prague, mentioned by Stölzel in Mattheson's *Grundlagen einer Ehrenpforte*, published in 1740. This document also contains references to the Prague Academy of Music and its spiritual leader, the Baron of Hartig, brother of the one whom Weiss dedicated a *Tombeau* after his untimely death in a riding accident in his 33<sup>rd</sup> year.

Careful examination of the [original manuscript](#), which has been astonishingly well preserved within the British Library, reveals certain details that the most sophisticated photocopiers cannot reproduce. The colour of the ink, for example, is of a uniformly dark tint (probably caused by the aging process) with the exception of a few paler corrected notes. Some of these corrections were typically made by scraping with a knife, occasionally leaving small holes in the paper. Each folio, on the other hand, is made of very thick pages - an indication that the highest quality of paper was sought for this compilation. Tim Crawford, who took over from Douglas Alton Smith the task of continuing the edition of the complete works of Weiss, has furnished many explanations of the genesis of the London Manuscript in his latest research. The works will be referred to by their *Weiss Sämtliche Werke* numberings. It seems increasingly plausible that this volume was compiled in Prague in three distinct phases with the collaboration of Weiss in 1717, 1719 and 1723. During the third of these sessions, Weiss made minor corrections and provided missing pages that were lost by the owner of the manuscript. This would explain why certain calligraphic changes correspond systematically to various folio changes. Also, from page 293 onward (the last 25 pages) the general appearance of the manuscript changes quite dramatically. The paper becomes thinner, with nine staves of tablature per page instead of eight, and the pieces are no longer numbered as were 184 of them in the first editing phase.

As an explanation for the addition of certain [preludes](#) in a second phase of the manuscript, Tim Crawford offers the interesting observation that if the performers didn't improvise the prelude of a sonata, they could stretch out what Weiss had quickly composed, usually within a restricted page space. Indeed Weiss's preludes often fill all in the space accorded to them, occasionally small as it may be. This suggests a spontaneous desire to give, after the fact, an example-prelude that was not included in the first phase of the compilation since it was assumed that the performer would improvise one before playing the sonata. Weiss's preludes were to serve as examples or backgrounds upon which one could embellish or elaborate musical material. This would explain the lack of concern regarding the possibility of exceeding allocated space. Thus, in a sonata without a prelude, it would be quite natural to concoct one from ideas taken from the other movements. This is a procedure that is gaining favour with contemporary lutenists and will almost certainly become commonplace with future generations of performers. I have been, in my view, ending my series of recordings in the way that it was begun - faithfully documenting works that were left in manuscript form within this great collection. This will not, however, hinder the possibility of some day adding improvised preludes to the sonatas that need them, or prolonging certain preludes in the manner outlined previously, during live performance. Of course, the manuscript does contain some preludes such as the one found in Sonata (WeissSW26) in D major, which is of unalterably perfect construction.

A list of the historical [sources](#) related to the works of Silvius Leopold Weiss is provided here, since we will be continuously making comparisons with the London source and the many concordances. Regular updating of this list is available in the database of the web site <http://mss.slweiss.de/index.php?lang=eng> put up by Peter Steur with the help of Markus Lutz. If the London, Dresden and Moscow folios are excluded, the remaining manuscripts consist, for the most part, of tablature notation featuring an incredible amount of pieces by other lutenists-composers from different countries and who remain little known, or, as is often the case, anonymous. Weiss pieces are to be found sprinkled throughout these collections of compositions by various composers. Though the total number of pieces known to be composed by Weiss exceeds 650 works, it is a certainty that others have either been lost or are awaiting authentication. An example of this permanent excavation is the recent discovery of the Harrach/Rohrau manuscript. It is also difficult to avoid a certain wistfulness when contemplating the existence of 34 partitas mentioned in the Breitkopf catalogue of 1769 that may have eluded re-discovery - a body of work containing more than 200 pieces. If it is true that these works disappeared in the terrible 1945 bombardment of Dresden, we are lucky that the six Dresden tablature books could be saved from the catastrophe.

The libraries of the world that have one or several manuscripts containing thousands of lute pieces among which those of Weiss are :

*Göttweig Abbey, Austria*  
*Kremsmünster Abbey, Austria*  
*Stadtbibliothek von Augsburg, Germany*  
*Biblioteca Nacional de Buenos Aires, Argentina*  
*Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles, Belgium*  
*Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles, Belgium*  
*Oddeleni Hudebne Historicke Moravskeho Muzea of Brno, Czech Republic*  
*Sächsische Landesbibliothek von Dresden, Germany*  
*Library of Count Goëss, Ebenthal Castle, Karnsten, Austria*  
*Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek von Göttingen, Germany*  
*Library of Carl Dolmetsch, Haslemere, England*  
*Den Haag Gementemuseum, The Netherlands*  
*Universitäts-und Stadtbibliothek von Köln, Germany.*  
*British Library of London, England*  
*Bayerische Staatsbibliothek von München, Germany*  
*Glinka Museum of Moscow, Russia*  
*Germanisches Nationalmuseum von Nürnberg*  
*New York Public Library, USA*  
*Knibovny Národniko Musea of Prague, Czech Republic*  
*Helichovo Muzeum of Podebrady, Czech Republic*  
*Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France (book of Countess of Chambure)*  
*Library of the Harrach family Castle, Rohrau, Austria*  
*Universitätsbibliothek von Rostock, Germany*  
*Stiftsbibliothek von Seitenstetten, Austria*  
*Studienbibliothek von Salzburg, Austria*  
*Bibliothèque de l'Institut de Musicologie de l'Université de Strasbourg, France*

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek von Vienna, Austria  
 University of Wrocław Library, Poland  
 University of Warsaw Library, Poland

Historical publications are :

- *The Cini Foundation of Venice, Italy. A lost work from which two pieces were transcribed by Oscar Chilesotti in Rivista musicale italiana 19, 1912*
- *Breitkopf thematic catalogue, Supplement IV, 1769, including 66 Incipits of 66 partitas by S.L.Weiss, from which 34 are lost*
- *Georg Philipp Telemann, Der Getreue Music Meister, 1729, Hamburg, Germany: a piece, in fact the only piece, that Weiss ever agreed to publish*

We used to take up the question of **nomenclature and numberings** according to Douglas Alton Smith, who begun the unabridged edition of Weiss's works in 1984 (Peters: Frankfurt). Smith undertook a thematic analysis and a master list of all the sonatas identified in this time, including solos and music for ensemble. Because of ongoing discoveries, and the passing of the torch from D.A. Smith (including over 580 Smith numbers in his thesis/compilation of 1977) to Tim Crawford with respect to the edition, it was then necessary to speak of Smith-Crawford numbers. In the recent years, it has been established to refer to the WeissSW numbering. Since there are several sources for the same work, many containing variable movement content, and since certain ensemble works can be played by various optional groupings - even sometimes staying as solo works in sources presenting them as such - reference to the numerical WeissSW system is necessary for precise identification. I must, for my part, in the interest of performance usage and in order to help the recording publications, present the works in three sections:

1. The 26 complete solo sonatas, as they appear in the original manuscript (a full 80% of the work).
2. The 35 isolated pieces or sonata sections, again following the order of appearance.
3. The 5 chamber music works (duos): the 3 *Concerts* for lute and flute, the 2 "mystery sonatas" (duos) including the *Largo* p.117 (duo that fits perfectly in the second mystery sonata).

This practical grouping by genre necessitates two enumerations that will stand together efficiently, following standard practice. We will use for example London Sonata no 20, WSW26 as we find for example in the work of Haydn the London Symphony no 5, Hob.1:97. We should be aware that the discrepancy between our enumeration and that of the WeissSW is due not only to their inclusion of the five duet sonatas, but also to my personal choice to keep as they are four pieces in B flat, rather than calling them sonata, the real sonata being complete in the Dresden manuscript. The missing movements in London are the minuet and the gavotte, and Dresden bears a different prelude. Another discrepancy is that the Dresden bourree is a sufficiently expanded variant of the London one to make it an independent piece. This leaves us with only two common pieces: the overture and the courante. Since there are in London four pieces in C and four pieces in D (towards the end of the manuscript) that seem also to be incomplete sonatas, one could wonder why these groupings are not considered as well sonatas in their own right. Nevertheless, D.A.Smith chose not to call sonata the pieces in C and those in D but he did for these problematic pieces in B flat, probably to establish a concordance with Dresden. With only two real concordant movements, I have chosen personally to identify in my analysis the WSW4 pieces like the C major and the D major pieces, that is, as individual pieces. I would have also stretched things for my recording by including the two missing pieces whilst omitting, of necessity, one of the two preludes. For a performer, it would seem awkward to record "entirely" a London sonata coming from Dresden and skip it in a recording of Dresden, including only orphaned movements of an actual complete sonata. Influenced by this logical necessity and as my intention was to remain as faithful as possible to the originals, I have decided to refrain from changing the presentation of the London version.

Three exterior pieces must be included as **added pieces** in the London Manuscript because they are temperamentally linked to the volume. These works are: The fantasy of the solo sonata no 7 WSW11, the prelude of the solo sonata no 8 WSW12 and the bourree Double of the solo sonata no 9 WSW13. This brings the total of pieces being played or discussed to 240.

On the other hand, the *Largo* from this ninth sonata should be excluded from the solos and contained instead within the duo works. This exclusion is striking as it is the principal reason why the Smith-Peters edition contains reconstructions of the flute parts, not only in the case of the five large duos but also in the *Largo*. Of course, other **versions and instrumentations** remain possible (with violin for example, or the participation of the harpsichord and gamba combination). Six or seven other pieces from the manuscript have seemed so far to most lutenists and musicologists to be "hidden" duos. While remaining possible duos indeed, these are still quite playable as solos and would confirm my idea that, sometimes, musical compositions of the Baroque, as in the Renaissance, could have been used as both. This holds also for the approximately eight pieces that "were not" written by Weiss. At first reading one believes that the writing and technical styles are foreign to Silvius, but serious practicing again disproves at a rather high degree this hypothesis due to a lack of instrumental analysis. In the best of conjectures, strong doubts remain in these cases except for the *Allegro* p.38 and the *Courente Royale* p.40, which really look like being not from him. This is a different situation than that of the second *Concert* with flute, which is clearly attributed to Leopold's brother, Johann Sigismund. The same goes for the "Unfortunate Lover" (p. 132), a still well known work written previously by Gallot that Weiss took up admiringly and admirably, as did Liszt and Busoni with Paganini and Bach.

There is no continuous numbering for the 26 solo sonatas, but six of them bear the title *Parte* with a **strange number**: *Parte 11, Parte 13, Parte 6to, Parte 15, Parte 10* and *Parte 4to* appear sporadically and inexplicably at the beginnings of five preludes and a fantasy. This also holds for *N:16, N:4, N:6, N:9, N:6, N:4, N:4* and *N.16*, inscribed, seemingly by the same hand at the beginnings of other pieces with varying musical character. This strange nomenclature has not been hitherto discussed by analysts. At first glance, no connection seems possible with the Breitkopf Catalogue (1769) numeration containing incipits of 66 Weiss partitas, nor with any other known source. One possible explanation for this numbering could be that it corresponded to somebody else's collection or reference, whatever it would be.

The sonatas contain six or seven movements each with the exception of three eight-movement sonatas and one that extends to a full ten movements. This last-mentioned work bears the [title](#) *Divertimento à solo*. There are also two with purely literary titles: *The Infidel* and *The Celebrated Pirate*. To these three titled works are added the above-mentioned 6 groupings bearing the title *Parte* (supposedly meaning *partie* or *partita*). But none is identified as a suite or sonata. Although the term suite would appear to be the most fitting way of identifying these instrumental collections (following the 17<sup>th</sup> century lutenists), the term sonata was officially attributed by D.A.Smith since Dresden bears seven times the title *Suonata*, four of them being concordant with London. Nevertheless, realising that *Partita* or *Partie* are the most often encountered titles in all Weiss's manuscripts, one is wondering why D.A.Smith didn't choose, instead of sonata, the term *Parte* (or *Partita*) since it appears also six times in London. This might be because the Dresden inscriptions *Suonata* are sometimes by Weiss himself, and the titles *Parte* in London are considered as being added by an unknown person.

We should specify that each of the six hundred odd works by Weiss has an individual number. The 580 [Smith numbers](#) of his thesis/compilation of 1977 are now augmented and under continuous revision. It is necessary to readjust these numbers periodically (see updates on the Steur database website). What is most fascinating is the knowledge that there are manuscripts in European libraries containing so many lute pieces that remain unperformed ! While scrolling through those manuscripts one becomes aware of a musical Eldorado, a new "cultural continent" waiting for exploration, a task that will require the efforts of generations of scholars and performers, possibly for centuries.

The Smith-Peters edition has also assigned numbers to the isolated pieces of this folio (There are 28 in the edition) in addition to the number provided for each sonata. I have decided not to indicate these numbers in the Description of the works, nor, for that matter, the individual numbers of the large Smith catalogue, considering that the pieces can be best identified by their pages.

The current rediscovery of Weiss's [chamber music](#) is both surprising and amazing the musical world of the present. The chamber works seem to reveal the composer's genius with even more aplomb than his works for lute solo, owing to their easier comparison to the chamber music of such composers as Bach, Haendel and Telemann. Weiss's solo works, albeit more and more admired –and with good reason–, tend to disclose little of their intrinsic worth due to a lack of grounds for comparison, notwithstanding their contemporaneity to Bach's solo lute works. Moreover, there are two additional surprises. Firstly, the second *Concert* of the London Manuscript is composed not by Silvius Leopold but by Sigismund Weiss (c. 1695-1737), the younger brother of Silvius. Secondly, all the flute parts in the manuscript have been reconstructed, since the originals have disappeared. To our knowledge, Eileen Hadidian is the first to have published, in the Smith-Peters edition (1983-1990), complete reconstructions. This edition has helped performers in considering these works as both valid and playable. According to my personal experience while preparing the complete recording of the London Manuscript, I wished to maintain a certain connection to this edition by making, with the help of flautist Christiane Laflamme, some corrections to nine movements rewritten by Hadidian although leaving them almost untouched. However, acting as a performing musician more concerned with obtaining a closer reproduction of Weiss's lyricism than with adhering to musicological rules, I have deemed it necessary to rewrite fifteen sections myself (of a total of 24). We did the slight corrections of the Hadidian lines with a view to improving the sonic balance and the musical discourse.

Four of the most authoritative [references](#) on Weiss are:

1. The thesis/catalogue of Douglas Alton Smith (1977)
2. The long article on Weiss by Smith which appeared in the January 1980 edition of *Early Music*
3. The Complete Works begun with Peters and Smith in 1984 for the London Manuscript. This work has been continued (The Dresden Manuscript, the Moscow manuscript, etc.) by Tim Crawford and other scholars. The essential parts of these editions are the *Critical commentaries*. For London, there are four volumes. The first two have the facsimile of the tablatures with annotations by Smith, and the last two their transcription in modern two staff notation, which has compelled the transcribers to interpret some note values that were logically left imprecise in the tablature, and to chose precise slurring although many of the slurs are not intended to the notes we think of, since they were made mostly with a suggestive graphic technique. This is why many obvious slurs were parallelly intentionally omitted, in the manner of figured bass. One must know that in these two cases, reference to the original tablature is necessary (See my analysis in Appendix 3)
- 4) Tim Crawford's updated analysis of 2000, published in the *Lute Society of America Journal*, which helps to understand the making of the London and the Dresden mss.

In addition to these references the interpreter must procure the fifty or so different Weiss sources, of which it is advisable to consult the regularly enlarged listing. From this departure point it is necessary to examine facsimiles of all the sources.

With original sources and the texts by Crawford and Smith in hand, in addition to correct knowledge of Baroque ornamentation, a performer should have all the necessary materials to explore the interpretation of lute music by Weiss and his contemporaries. I speak from personal experience that discoveries in this field are both abundant and fascinating. Due to the quantity of pieces, existing as they do in several versions, a wide variety of possible interpretations can be noted in the different copies : of the 237 pieces in this London Manuscript, for example, at least 135 are concordant with other (sometimes multiple) sources. To help understand the immense artistic amplex of these works, I would like to recommend to anyone interested in Weiss to read the extraordinary poem by a contemporary writer, Johann Ulrich [von König](#) (1688-1744), containing a large section describing the incredible touch of the composer-lutenist. (See Kenneth Sparr's article in the 1986 *Journal of the Lute Society of America*).

Michel Cardin

## 3. Description of the works

### 26 solo sonatas / 35 individual pieces / 5 ensemble works (duos)

It would seem that decisions of an editorial nature concerning the content of this important book of music have been proven to be judicious. Contrary to the views of some, all of the works contained in this manuscript are of great value and worthy of inclusion in any series of recordings or concert program. Please remember that we will follow, notwithstanding the three category presentation, the pagination of the manuscript, except for four adjustments – one for inserting the strayed menuet p.242 in its sonata no 26, the other for joining pieces of same tonality (bourree p.39), the third one for including the Largo (duo) (p.117) in the *Duo* 5 in d minor, and the last one for reasons of thematic affinity by rallying the fantasie p.305 to the prelude in C.

#### 26 solo sonatas

<i>Sonata n° 1 in F major</i>	(WeissSW 1)	<i>Sonata n° 16 in G major</i>	(WeissSW 22)
<i>Sonata n° 2 in D major</i>	(WeissSW 2)	<i>Sonata n° 17 en B flat major</i>	
<i>Sonata n° 3 in g minor</i>	(WeissSW 3)	« <i>Divertimento à solo</i> »	(WeissSW 23)
<i>Sonata n° 4 in G major</i>	(WeissSW 5)	<i>Sonata n° 18 in C major</i>	(WeissSW 24)
<i>Sonata n° 5 in c minor</i>	(WeissSW 7)	<i>Sonata n° 19 in g minor</i>	(WeissSW 25)
<i>Sonata n° 6 in E flat major</i>	(WeissSW 10)	<i>Sonata n° 20 in D major</i>	(WeissSW 26)
<i>Sonata n° 7 in d minor</i>	(WeissSW 11)	<i>Sonata n° 21 in c minor</i>	(WeissSW 27)
<i>Sonata n° 8 in A major</i>	(WeissSW 12)	<i>Sonata n° 22 in F major</i>	
<i>Sonata n° 9 in d minor</i>	(WeissSW 13)	« <i>Le Fameux Corsaire</i> »	(WeissSW 28)
<i>Sonata n° 10 in B flat major</i>	(WeissSW 15)	<i>Sonata n° 23 in a minor</i>	
<i>Sonata n° 11 in A major</i>	(WeissSW 16)	« <i>L'infidèle</i> »	(WeissSW 29)
<i>Sonata n° 12 in C major</i>	(WeissSW 17)	<i>Sonata n° 24 in E flat major</i>	(WeissSW 30)
<i>Sonata n° 13 in D major</i>	(WeissSW 18)	<i>Sonata n° 25 in F major</i>	(WeissSW 31)
<i>Sonata n° 14 in F major</i>	(WeissSW 19)	<i>Sonata n° 26 in F major</i>	(WeissSW 32)
<i>Sonata n° 15 in f minor</i>	(WeissSW 21)		

#### 35 individual pieces

<i>Menuet (p.11) in F (WeissSW 1.8)</i>	<i>Tombeau d'Hartig (p.176) in e b m (WeissSW 11*)</i>
<i>Men: (p.12) in F (WeissSW 1.9)</i>	<i>(Bourrée) (p.178) in C (WeissSW 12*)</i>
<i>Gavotte (p.13) in F (WeissSW 1.10)</i>	<i>Menuet (p.180) in C (WeissSW 13*)</i>
<i>Gavotte et double (p.22) in D (WeissSW 2.8/2.9)</i>	<i>Gavotte (p.199) in d m (WeissSW 14*)</i>
<i>Prélude (p.33) in B b (WeissSW 4.1)</i>	<i>Men: (p.199) in d m (WeissSW 15*)</i>
<i>Ouverture (p.34) in B b (WeissSW 4.2)</i>	<i>Praelude (et fugue) (p.290) in E b (WeissSW 17*)</i>
<i>Cour: (p.36) in B b (WeissSW 4.3)</i>	<i>Menuet et Trio (p.292) in G (WeissSW 18*/19*)</i>
<i>Bouree (p.39) in B b (WeissSW 4.4)</i>	<i>Bourée (p.299) in F (WeissSW 31.7)</i>
<i>Allegro (p.38) in G (WeissSW 1*)</i>	<i>Tombeau de Logy (p.300) in b b m (WeissSW 20*)</i>
<i>Courente Royale (p.40) in G (WeissSW 2*)</i>	<i>Prelud: de Weifs (p.302) in C (WeissSW 21*)</i>
<i>Prelude (p.80) in E b (WeissSW 10.1)</i>	<i>Fantasie (p.305) in C (WeissSW 24*)</i>
<i>(Menuet) (p.92) in G (WeissSW 4*)</i>	<i>Menuet (p.303) in C (WeissSW 22*)</i>
<i>Fuga (p.118) in C (WeissSW 6*)</i>	<i>Gavotte (p.304) in C (WeissSW 23*)</i>
<i>Fuga (p.130) in d m (WeissSW 7*)</i>	<i>Capricio (p.306) in D (WeissSW 25*)</i>
<i>L'Amant Malheureux (p.132) in a m (WeissSW 8*)</i>	<i>Menuet (p.308) in D (WeissSW 26*)</i>
<i>Fantasie (p.134) in c m (WeissSW 9*)</i>	<i>Menuet 2 (p.309) in D (WeissSW 27*)</i>
<i>(Menuet) (p.136) in B b (WeissSW 10*)</i>	<i>Mademoiselle Tiroloise (p.310) in D (WeissSW 28*)</i>
<i>Plainte (p.137) in B b (WeissSW 15.1)</i>	

### 5 ensemble works (duos)

1. *Concert d'un Luth et d'une Flute traversiere. Del Sig.re Weis (WeissSW 6) in B flat*
2. *Concert d'un Luth avec une Flute traversiere. Del Sigismundo Weis. (WeissSW 8) in B flat*
3. *Concert d'un Luth avec la Flute traversiere. Del S.L. Weis. (WeissSW 9) in F*
4. *Duo 4 in g minor (WeissSW 14)*
5. *Duo 5 in d minor (WeissSW 20)*

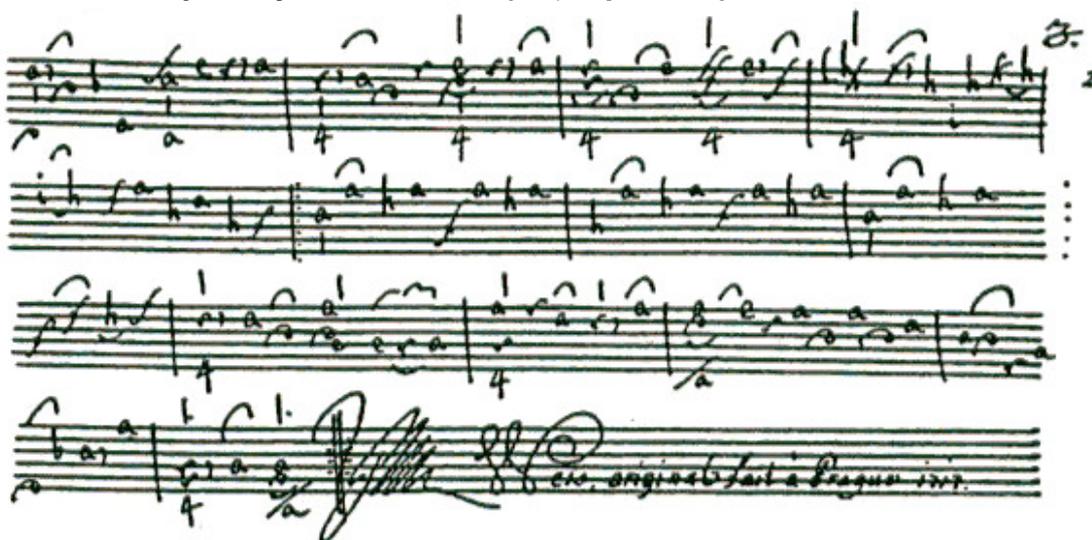
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### 26 solo sonatas

#### Sonata no 1 in F major (WeissSW 1)

This sonata is also found in the Dresden Manuscript. We do find however, fragments of this work in the folios of Vienna, Rohrau, Rostock and Warsaw, the latter containing three versions for each piece. All versions are similar except for certain left-hand performance indications (slurs). Because of the large number of slurs possible within a given piece, variations inevitably occur from one version to another. It is a rare performer indeed who can resist successfully the urge to modify these articulations to suit his personal technique. While the choice of left-hand articulations has a direct bearing on the musical outcome, it is also true that these decisions fall well within the purview of what is commonly recognised as interpretive 'personality'. Nevertheless one might attempt to remain as faithful as possible to the London version, as much for reasons of harmonic integrity as for accuracy of slurring.

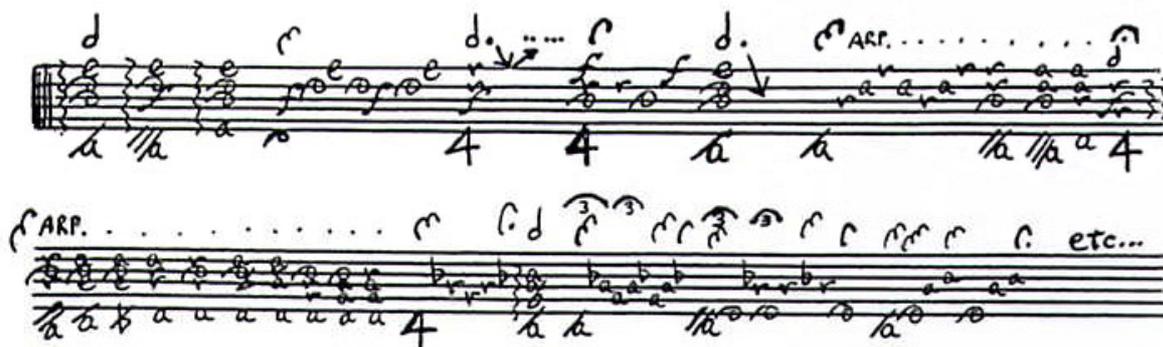
As a primary source, the first sonata leaves little to guesswork. Four out of the seven movements are signed and dated by the composer with the allemande bearing the inscription in French, "*Weis, originally composed in Prague 1717*".



The London Manuscript, page 3, end of the allemande, Sonata no 1

In addition, the London and Vienna versions are entirely in autograph format. At the beginning of the *Praelude* which serves also as a starting point for the entire volume, no less than 27 chords are notated in the value of minims. This notational fashion compels various interpretations since standard procedure during this era would require an improvisation on these open rhythmic structures. As a result, I would choose to execute the beginning in a calm, restrained manner to permit the tonal interplay to unfold according to the common practice of the period as explained by the likes of the composer and theorist from Hamburg Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) (the same individual who both denigrated the lute while openly praising Weiss!). The key of F major is thus described as serene, dignified, and understated: "*This key is evocative of the most noble of universal sentiments with such ease that it is unnecessary to force the tones. Its magnanimous allure can be best compared to a perfect character in all aspects, redeeming, as the French would say, a 'bonne grâce'.*"

Seven tranquil, meditative, introductory chords could be then followed by a cycle of arpeggiated vertical sonorities leading to a cadence which capriciously detaches the last of these 27 chords, melting smoothly into the rest of the prelude, retaining its spontaneous atmosphere to the last note:



Example of ornamentation: beginning of the prelude, Sonata no 1

The discretely grandiloquent *Allemande* is also highly representative of F major while the extremely lyric courante (written *Cour:*) seems to have been written far from the actual instrument. While this presents certain performance challenges, the slightly unidiomatic writing provides a refreshing digression in an otherwise continuous texture. While scarcely concealing its humorous nature, the highly spirited *Bouree* is succeeded by a sombre sarabande (*Sarab:*) in the relative minor. The successive musical waves are generated by a single rhythmic impulse:  following a descending-ascending melodic curve that conforms to the shape of the opening of each of the seven movements. This is indicative of the sense of large-dimensional synthesis and rigorous construction that characterise so much of the work of Weiss. For further evidence we need only examine the fundamental structure of the beginning of each movement:



The minuet (*Men:*), candid in character, is provided with the dynamic markings of *p* and *f* in measures 6 and 9 respectively. This is rather unusual since notated indications of amplitude were generally seen as redundancies, except where specific effects were desired. Furthermore, the range of personal expression available to the Nineteenth-Century composer was not in evidence in the music of this period, the composer not being expected to specify those areas of interpretation, which were very important but left to the discretion of the performer and to the inspiration of each performance. The *Gigue* ends the sonata in an upbeat mood while irresistibly inviting the listener to dance. Notice the bass leaps which serve to accentuate this dancing atmosphere.

If the sonata has to be considered in its basic form and with the London Manuscript as first reference, it can be stated that this *gigue* concludes the Sonata no 1 (seven movements). D.A. Smith's thematic analysis however, acknowledges five more movements to it (even a sixth one could be added, it was either forgotten or rejected by Smith), namely: the two minuets and the gavotte following the *gigue* in the London ms; a prelude beginning the Vienna version; a chaconne (plus possibly another prelude placed at the end) in one of the Warsaw copies. A performance of the collected sonata in thirteen movements is of course within the realm of the possible, but it is our fear that a sonata of forty minutes duration containing three minuets, not to mention three preludes, could verge on the bizarre. Since these are obviously not additional movements, rather interchangeable replacements, it remains, in our opinion incumbent on each performer to create his or her personal mix while adhering to standard guidelines of piece ordering. At any rate, I will discuss the three London supplements (2 minuets and gavotte) in the next individual pieces' section.

### [Sonata no 2 in D major \(WeissSW 2\)](#)

The seven constituent movements of the second sonata are also scattered throughout ten different cities in Europe. When the lute is tuned to a tonality that is far removed from the basic d minor tuning, there is a marked change in the melodic possibilities available due to the different distribution of open strings in the bass. One might assume that this would serendipitously inspire unforeseen scalar configurations in the new key. Weiss was fond of the colourful modulations that occur when one explores the beautiful inner timbres of the instrument while using, for example, the leading tone in the lower register. The key of D major ("... naturally strong and wilful, being perfectly adaptable to the brilliant expression of all things amusing, martial and happy" - Mattheson) is very different from F major. Weiss seems to agree, because the *Prelude* is unrelieved by occasional sweetness or respite, preferring to remain brilliantly and unambiguously forceful.

As for the Sonata no 1, alternate movements are to be connected with the Sonata no 2: The gavotte and double following in the London version, which will be discussed in the next section, and a chaconne ending the Warsaw copy. Weiss's handwriting in London can be found in the *allemande*, the first half of the *courante*, a segment of the *sarabande*, and the *minuet* and *gigue*.

If the *allemande* (*Allem:*) is frail and restrained, it nonetheless adheres to the character of its tonality because, as stated by Mattheson, "a great delicateness can be summoned during calm moments of D major". The contrast between prelude and *allemande* is clear and natural. The *courante* (*Cour:*) is unusual from two points of view. It is written in semi-quavers, not in the more habitual quaver notation. Secondly, it is a virtual tour-de-force for the ring finger of the right hand, providing ample evidence that Weiss used this finger regularly, in stark contrast to the practice of his contemporaries. This technique permits the use of continuous arpeggiation in the *courante*. The *Bourée* retains a dynamic, festive quality while the *sarabande* (*Sarab:*) offers languishing chords with sensitive *appoggiatura* followed by a second, more despondent section. The minuet (*Men:*), as brief as it is carefree, is quickly superseded by a *Giga* that conveys the more traditional aspects of D major.

### [Sonata no 3 in G minor \(WeissSW 3\)](#)

This sonata has no other version and is presented here in two of Weiss's assistants' writings. It is unique due to the absence of a final movement, the closing movement having been replaced by two minuets. It would have been in keeping with standard practice to simply borrow a *gigue* from another manuscript, but I think we should instead leave the work as indicated for one very important reason. The inscription after the second movement reads "Il primo minuetto da capo è poi requiescant in pace". This instruction begins as a common musical directive but ends humorously in Church Latin with the wish of the composer to "Repeat the first minuet and rest evermore in peace." In other words, "seek not a final movement". As further justification, it is to be noted that there are no movements missing in any of the other sonatas in the London Manuscript, apart from no 9. We could even say that most have a fair number and that adding a movement could have been easy, this having been made elsewhere in the manuscript anyway.

The stage is set with a dramatic short *Prelude*, this time presenting us with the key of G minor in a way that would seem unconventional to Mattheson for whom the tonality was "without a doubt the most beautiful of tonalities, caressing with a suppleness that enables one to combine moderate nostalgia with peaceful joy". The *Allemande* confirms the dramatic sentiment of the prelude. The fatalism and sadness

are evocative of the two *Tombeaux* written by Weiss. The courante (*Courr:*) is a prime example of the successful integration of melodic and harmonic structure within a lyric bel canto setting. This lyricism exists in spite of the frequently large intervals, similar to the melodic construction found in the works for unaccompanied violin and cello by J. S. Bach, a colleague of Weiss who was possibly more than one could think, influenced by this famous lute composer. The *Bouree* employs the technique of left-hand slurring to shape the melodic line. (The spelling here is *Bouree* as elsewhere in the London Manuscript (sometimes *Bourée*), whereas it is written more often as *Bourrée* in the Dresden Manuscript. Here the slurs assist the phrase flow, but only in the descending passages. To ascend melodically Weiss either removes the slurs or proceeds by 'harmonic stepping'. The most striking examples are to be found at the very end and beginning of the piece:



The character of the *Sarabande* seems to remain stoic in the face of implacable melancholy. In the final measures, however, it is the melancholy that prevails with the tones slowly expiring, one after the other. The *Menuet* and *Menuet 2do* (secundo) offer a mixture of lightness and sobriety, with moments of chatter followed by periods of austerity. This serves to confirm the previous description of G minor which supposedly "*reconciles a serious side with a petulant charm*" However peculiar, this ending, which is clearly delineated by long musical breaths, must have seemed both an adequate and appropriate manner for the composer to end this third sonata for lute. For those concerned by the two enigmatic staves following the minuet, the explanation is quite simply that these are not part of any of the sonata movements and rather constitute an arpeggio exercise quickly drafted at the bottom of the page.

#### *Sonata no 4 in G major (WeissSW 5)*

As in the case of the Sonata no 3, the Sonata no 4 is not autograph copy, except for a few corrections here and there. It is a unique and complete version, rendering moot any comparative analysis or search for additional movements, as was the case, for example, in the first and second sonatas, excepting of course the two first bars of the allemande, present as it is in the 1769 Breitkopf incipit catalogue. The fourth Sonata is found in close proximity to an *Allegro* and a *Courente Royale* in G, it is true; but unlike the earlier sonatas just mentioned, the stylistic continuity that might link these three pieces is missing.

The opening notes of the prelude bear a striking resemblance to those of Bach's first suite for solo cello (also in G major), as does the gigue to Bach's third partita for solo violin. Near the end (not at the beginning!) of the bourree there is a surprising allusion, we believe, to the Harmonious Blacksmith's theme used also by Haendel (but not from him either) in his fifth harpsichord suite.

The *Prelude*, then, reminds us of Bach in several aspects with the exception of its size. Whereas Bach insists upon fewer yet grander works in which he explores the musical possibilities of a single theme, Weiss is economical in the exploration of a theme but is the writer of more improvised preludes in the sonata/suite/partita format. Weiss followed his usual practice (except once) of omitting bar-lines although the beat is quite regular; the metrical unit being the quaver which would suggest a moderate speed. Following the prelude is an elegiac and meditative *Allemande* distinguished by the frequent usage of the high register at the beginning of a phrase. The courante (*Courr:*), with its supple arpeggios, offers yet another resemblance not of theme but of overall workmanship, this time to Vivaldi. The famous prolonged modulations of the 'red priest' are found from beginning to end. As we have come to expect with Weiss, it is the *Bourée* that follows the courante and not the sarabande. His brief and melodious phrases are varied in spite of their identical openings:



The *Sarabande* resolutely maintains a "*lively and evocative spirit*", both characteristic of the key of G Major. The *Menuet* itself is so lively that, in our opinion, the music is better served by a faster tempo. The soprano and bass voices joyously rebound by means of close entries. The *Gigue* maintains the same exuberance until the end and lends itself even more to ornamented repetitions. The arabesques thus added augment its panache as much as its conclusive character.

#### *Sonata no 5 in C minor (WeissSW 7)*

If the solo sonata no 4 can be called "the sonata of similarities", then the Sonata no 5 could be entitled the "French Sonata". In fact, it is one of the first compositions of Silvius Leopold, who had not yet left for his long sojourn in Italy (1710-14), and the influence of the old French masters of the lute appears to be untainted by the very Italianate influences upon which he would depend heavily at a later date. Not only is this sonata his oldest dated work (autographed 1706), but at its heading, in the Dresden version, Weiss states, "*Von anno 6. In Düsseldorf; ergo Nostra giuventu comparisce*" ("From the year 6 in Düsseldorf, therefore our youthful debut"). Silvius and his young brother Sigismund were at that time employed as lutenists at the Rhenish court of Düsseldorf.

The Dresden version is important, therefore, because of this marking. However, the minuet is missing, to be amended by Weiss himself in the London version, as with the courante: these are two insertions that can indeed be easily identified among the writings of one of the other five copyists. The allemande appears also in the Paris Manuscript and the courante and gigue in the Rohrau manuscript. The omission of a prelude by Weiss, and his inclusion of a gavotte, allows us to establish a link with Bach's Six French suites, composed shortly thereafter. These also start with an allemande, three of them contain a gavotte, and one is also in C minor. Without claiming that these models were canonical, one can understand nevertheless that the French style sought after by the late German Baroque musicians encouraged them to apply certain structural conventions.

From the outset of the *Allemande* we are seized simultaneously by the tragic darkness of the soprano voice's low register and by the melodic style that is indicative of the "French Lutenists". Many works found in the voluminous repertoire of the Seventeenth-Century Baroque Lute begin this way. I would choose nevertheless to respect the "notes égales", of more common practice in the late Baroque although the "notes inégales" would have been appropriate. The Dresden version presents us with an interesting variant from the London one which is more spare. The comparison allows us to gauge the limits of our aesthetic jurisdiction when, as interpreters, we are tempted to change the fingerings or even the notes. It is not always advisable, this instance being a case in point, to mix different versions within the same interpretation, when discrepancies regarding phrasing or fingering are too strong. A performer will have to choose, therefore,

one of the two versions, feeling free to add ornamentation while remaining coherent within the chosen version. My own choice was London, however with free, yet coherent, ornamentation.

“The inherent sadness of the C minor key does not prevent us from being energetic (lively) whenever the composition permits”, as is the case with the Courante (*Cour.*). The interplay of the hemiolas in combination with the interior voices hidden in the principle lines (not visible in the score but revealed by the acoustic properties of the instrument which enforce a precise duration to each note thus rendering separate the interior lines) confers a great spirituality to the work (See Appendix 1. *The late Baroque Lute seen through S.L.Weiss*). The following *Gavotte*, even more in the style of the “French Lutenists” than the beginning of the *allemande*, compels us to choose the “notes inégales” since its meaning could be lost by playing the “notes égales”. Certain cadences strongly recall, among others, Robert de Visée, such as the beginning of the following *Sarabande* which uses the dotted quaver formula  rather than equal crotchets or quavers. Finally, regarding the *gavotte*, we should mention its stylistic affiliation with the courante of Bach’s first lute sonata. Both alternate passages of “leaping” quavers with more regular semiquaver treatment, all of which adds to the ambiguous charm of the “notes inégales” that, in the French style, causes a controlled rhythmic displacement rather than a more meticulous seeding of dotted rhythms.

Another kind of rhythmic inequality is often obvious, this time in the sarabandes. The long meditative sighs at times lengthen the measure, but in our defence against critics who deplore a measure that is not always strictly held, we would respond, ‘How can one be expressive while playing metronomically from beginning to end?’ Let us not forget that several authors of the time, some as early as Caccini in 1601, made mention of this throughout the entire Baroque era. No lesser than François Couperin is known to have opined, “One must not tie oneself too precisely to the metre ; one must sacrifice everything to taste, to the clarity of the passages and to attenuate the accents”. This sarabande reflects the principle quality attributed to C minor at the time, “A charming timbre in spite of its sadness”. The same can be said of the *Menuet* which by its style favours another kind of rhythmic inequality typical of the Baroque - notably the Lombard rhythm, which consists simply of inverted “notes inégales”: , with the shorter value preceding the long, instead of , this being made naturally and more often in a descending line. The music itself dictates the utilisation of this device at the start of the second section as well as at the reprise.

The final *Gigue* resembles the courante; it is serious but very dynamic. The diatonically descending basses take on a dramatic amplitude that has provoked the commentary of historians that the Baroque “was ruled by the bass”. This affirmation concerns of course the writing style but also serves to acknowledge the rich bass tones that were the result of innovative instrumental design. A final comment concerning this sonata has to do with the astounding versatility of the right-hand technique. At the age of twenty, Weiss’s right hand technique was already perfect, although he did not yet have the compositional stamina that would characterise his later works. Proof of this can be seen in his usage of audaciously difficult interval leaps.

#### Sonata no 6 in E flat major (WeissSW 10)

The tonality of E flat major officially “conveys more serious subject matter and favours the pathetic in its expression”. However, with the exception of a somewhat strained sensation of tonal colour, we have to admit that this sonata is energetic and versatile, even sometimes luminous. We have here the only existing version (except the courante, in the last Dresden sonata, concordance which is not mentioned in the Smith Critical Commentary). Another choice has to be made at this point. We have here two preludes, the second of which is a short simple variant of the first, this one being broad and powerful. Since one of the two must be dropped in a standard performance of the sonata, it would seem preferable to retain the first as a complete isolated piece.

The second *Prelude*, being unmeasured, according to standard practice (as is the first prelude), fills exactly the space left on the page (See the General Context about the preludes). It barely constitutes an entrance for the establishment of the key. For a few short moments, the music revolves around the tonic chord. Subsequently an arpeggiated passage leads to a cadence bringing us abruptly to the *Allemande*, a serene yet disenchanting soliloquy. One notices the use of unisons similar to those of the *allemande* in Sonata no 4 WeissSW 5. The following courante (*Cour.*) links without respite larger phrases to the more sprightly melodies. We hardly have time to pause before reaching the conclusion of each section. The *Bouree* is even more lively and its brilliant progress brings us in one fell swoop to the final note. The *Sarabande* remains in the home key and not, as it is often the case, in the related minor. The beginning theme could be confused with that of the *chaconne* which will follow three pages further on. In the sarabande it is worthwhile to make abundant usage of variations in dynamics in the repetitions of the two sections. Shortly after the beginning of the second one, a sensuousness is revealed, a melodic dream such that a measure could, for example, become spontaneously ornamented by straddling its harmony over the bar line into the next. But, since this latter prolongs a chord for three beats we must compensate on the third beat by means of rhythmic diminution:



This is of course a very personal suggestion, though very much in the spirit of this music (See the Quantz examples). We are tempted to subtitle the *Menuet* “The Hiccup”. It shares, nonetheless, the graceful attributes characteristic of the other minuets. There are slurs placed knowingly in conjunction with the unexpected reverberation of certain notes during the changes of strings that suggest to us the “hiccup” phrasing. By accentuating the ornaments and their possible variants we hear subtle echoes from one phrase to another. Here again is a good example of a piece for lute that seems monotonous as written but unveils all its richness as soon as it is interpreted on the instrument. The *Ciaccone* replaces the more usual gigue as the final movement, and is the only autograph piece in this sonata. It is composed of an initial theme, six variations, and a conclusion. This *chaconne* is elegantly simple, balanced; the primary musical objective being the expression of the lyric potential of the voices.

### Sonata no 7 in D minor (WeissSW 11)

Referring as always to Mattheson, we can find in the key of D minor "something devotional and still, while at the same time grand, pleasant and satisfying. The implication is that devotion will be heard in a sacred context and peace in an earthly milieu, without hindering the occurrence of a certain 'subdued lightness' ". This tonal portrait seems to be an accurate reflection of what one perceives. Four complete copies of this sonata can be found at this time of writing (the London version, one in Dresden and two copies at the University of Warsaw). Some of the movements can be located individually in other European libraries. In the London version, in someone else's hand except for a few autograph corrections, this sonata begins directly with the allemande. The seemingly later Dresden version appears to include some modifications. Inscribed *Partie de S.L. Weiss*, it begins with a *Fantasia* (WeissSW 11.7) which is, in effect, an unmeasured prelude that has an improvisational quality. This fantasia, with eloquent phrases, is, in my opinion, indispensable and has to be attached to the London version. Alternatively, one could play the introductory prelude from one of the Warsaw copies, each of which is similar in emotional quality.

The *Allemande*, steeped in sadness (the words 'devotional' and 'grand' come to mind) immerses us in a meditative state before leading us to one of the most surprising of Weiss's courantes (*Cour:* ), full of unusual modulations in an obstinately pulsating rhythm. No wonder why Quantz, duet partner of Weiss, made a transcription of it for solo flute. The *Gavotte* remains in the rhythmic character of the courante only to reach the 'still', calm sarabande (*Sarab:* ). As is often the case with Weiss, the *Menuet* is full of rhythmic and harmonic recollections of prior movements, the most remarkable being the ascending line found previously in the courante and the allemande. Finally the monumental *Gigue* begins, with a real Bachian grandeur, leaving for the end the exhilarating semi-quaver passages so evocative of the above-mentioned subdued lightness.

### Sonata no 8 in A major (WeissSW 12)

More so possibly than any of the others, this sonata embodies the essence of *galanterie*. The term was used to describe on the one hand the instrumental solo or chamber music of the period (as opposed to music of a theatrical or religious nature) and on the other, as an indication of the state of elegance and delicateness attained by this music, so preferred by Weiss. His taste, in combination with his preoccupation for *galanterie*, gives to his works a hint of the *style galant*, the 'new music' of the day. Weiss, like his colleague Bach, is in fact more representative of the Germanic style, a synthesis achieved through moderation of the two prevailing Baroque tendencies of the 17th Century, namely the sober, subtly-ornamented *style français* and the more flamboyant *Italian style*. Although both masters were to remain resolutely Baroque, Weiss was to display more of the gallant tendencies that make his work a kind of an 'in-between' with its transitory foreshadowing of the Classical period. We can see in his later works, firmly anchored as they are in the Baroque spirit, some of the components of sonata form. The essence of this classicism emanates from work as early as that of the eighth sonata, with its characteristic lightness, grace and equilibrium. Here there is no forced writing, only clear lyric themes, repeated without cumbersome counterpoint; in all a perfect expression of that controlled lightness we now recognize as the product of a refined, conscientious artistic spirit (which is not to say that his music lacks passion, as is so aptly disproved by the sarabande).

The Sonata no 8 - not an autograph manuscript- shares a certain similarity with the Sonata no 1. It exists in several sources, and has many alternate movements, totalling eleven in all, including three preludes and one *Conclude*. Here again, a choice should be made for a standard setting. Given the desire to maintain coherence with our synthesis of the London and Dresden manuscripts, the two main sources, we should, logically speaking, borrow the *Prelude* WeissSW 12.8, as is the case with the fantasia of the seventh sonata, from the Dresden version. Its heading bears the words "*Suonata del Sigre Sigism. Weifs*". However, Silvius crossed out his brother's name and added "S.L." instead, probably after reading his copyist's mistake. Here, in any event, is a prelude that serves primarily the function of establishing the tonality. Typical introductory chords spin out a web of simple modulations in a fashion not unlike the prelude of the first sonata, although it is shorter.

Mattheson describes the key of A major as "*moving in a melancholic way in spite of its brilliance, favouring the emotion of sadness over any usage as mere entertainment*". In the eighth sonata this seems to prove true only for the allemande and the chaconne, unless one chooses to argue that the sound of the lute is inherently melancholic. It is at least conceivable that the sadness of A major contributes in some way to the tender luminosity of the *Allemande*. What better way to describe the movement than as an act of 'noble tenderness'. A fragile freshness of gesture betrays the competence of the composer who has yet again found the perfect equilibrium between mere cerebral writing and pure expression. The following courante (*Cour:* ) retains a sense of grace and nobleness, presenting an uplifting thematic cellule



that is in turn subjected to brief agitated developmental treatment. Those lutenists who choose to compare the sources will notice in this sonata, as in the others, some slight divergences from the original score, notably, in the case of the courante, in the reading of the bass line. The Podedbrady Manuscript is definitely the preferred choice, in my opinion, for the bass line of this courante.

The same spirit prevails in the gently weaving phrases of the *Bourée*. The frank insouciance of this movement is brought abruptly to a close by the first chord of the *Sarabanda*, in the related key of F sharp minor. For me, this is the greatest piece of the whole London Manuscript, an extraordinary moment of interior state exploding all of a sudden in the listener's ear and mind. The change of modality announces an unexpectedly dramatic discourse of such grave import that one is immediately made mindful of an intense sadness, albeit so full of fierce and fiery haughtiness, of musical expression. Breathless phrases leap into even more soul-wrenching gestures before resolving fatalistically upon terminal sonorities. These moments of concentrated musical expression involve the use of '*balancement*' or *organ shake*, a heavy accentuated vibrato, giving the impression that the lute is crying in despair.

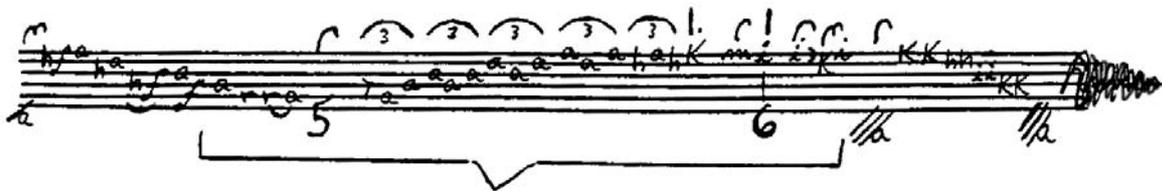
After the eloquent display of pain born of this tonality (Mattheson also speaks of it as "*leading to a languishing pain*" and as "*being of a singularly misanthropic nature*") the sonata continues with a *Menuet* that recalls the earlier mood of insouciance. In fact, *galanterie*, as expressed above, was so highly appreciated in the Germanic and neighbouring countries that it comes as no surprise to find such a wealth of minuets in early manuscripts, given the high suitability of this dance form as a vehicle for this courtly sentiment. After the minuet there follows a pair of concluding movements, specifically a *Ciaccona* and a *Gigue*. Bach did the same in his second violin partita but reversely ended it with the immense chaconne. Weiss's chaconne, to which can be added a final variation found in the Vienna and Augsburg versions, recombines the brilliant and more melancholic styles found in the work. Despite current practice, which abjures the repetition of closing themes, it is advisable here, in my view, to repeat this theme in deference to the fact that it is meticulously indicated in all manuscripts, allowing pertinent emphasis on the final musical phrases. It becomes at this point a matter of some importance to understand

that all the Baroque pieces, among which we include the chaconnes and passacailles of Weiss, which also have repeat marks in the last section were maybe in fact carefully played with ornamented repeats. The *Gigue* is a study in pure exuberance with notes ricocheting merrily in groups of three from beginning to end.

### Sonata no 9 in D minor (WeissSW 13)

This sonata is all in a copyist's hand, except for an embellishment suggestion at the bottom of a page, which is inscribed by Silvius himself. Some movements of this 5 movement sonata appear also in the Rostock and Götting manuscripts and the Bourrée alone appears in 13 different sources ! I mention five movements rather than six, since the *Largo* that appears to end the sonata would in fact, as stated in my introduction, seem to be part of a duet (most likely with transverse flute) that will be compiled here with the other duets in a third part. It is at least possible that Weiss (or the owner Adlersfeld) had decided to insert this one isolated page as a replacement for the more typical sarabande movement, noticeably absent from this sonata. (The duo is composed in the appropriate key, D minor, and it would come as no surprise to see this piece as being adaptable as a solo, considering the many possibilities for ornamentation).

The sonata displays nevertheless a remarkably high degree of thematic cohesion. At the beginning of each movement the melodic outline of the dominant => tonic polarity is reiterated in an obvious fashion using the same descending schema. In addition, there is a high degree of resemblance between the prelude and allemande and the equivalent movements for the seventh sonata. Some passages are, for all practical purposes, identical. As with the apparent reincarnation of various Scarlatti Sonatas in different collections, these works should not be considered as mere inferior variations of other previously or subsequently composed pieces. The proud toccata-like allure of the fantasia from the seventh sonata is contrasted by the seriousness of purpose found in the *Prelude* of the ninth sonata which, although initially self-contained and sweet, becomes slowly agitated to the point of anxiety. Immediately prior to the last chord of this unmeasured prelude, there is an indication to return to an insertion added in Weiss's hand, who presumably found the ending a bit hasty, necessitating the addition of a few modulating arpeggios before the conclusion. With the insertion ending as it does in the middle of a phrase at the end of a page (one surmises the existence of another scrap of paper containing the rest of the information) it has become necessary to recompose the missing material. My reconstruction has been kept to a minimum by merely completing the descending scale passage, and returning to the final chord by means of an arpeggio and a cadence which resembles, in all respects, the previous cadences:



Possible interpolation for the incomplete Weiss's insertion

The suspicion that these preludes were often improvised and committed to paper only after the successful completion of all other movements seems to be confirmed in this case. It is possible to discern the general spirit of the entire sonata through Weiss's use of harmonic and melodic sequences. While contemplating the devout character of D minor, is it not possible to view the beginning of the *Allemande* as a veritable pious offering? The subtle differences that exist between the allemandes of sonatas numbers seven and nine are, in my opinion, all the more noticeable against the background of the overwhelming similarity of these movements. With the courante (*Cour:*) however, we are no longer dealing with similarities, rather with a *variant*: an earlier version or a reworking of the same piece in Dresden Sonata WeissSW 34). The principle themes are identical in both variants, with differences occurring at the level of internal development. These differences are noteworthy to the extent that they give to each variant a unique musical character.

The *Bouree* must have been a popular 'hit' during the 18th century. Of all the works of Weiss, this one can be found in the greatest number of sources including the London ms I (2 versions including this one and WeissSW 3\*), London ms II (lutenist Straube's collection), Strasbourg, Rostock, Götting, Prague, Moscow, Warsaw (in four different volumes), and Buenos-Aires. The difficulty encountered while trying to obtain copies of all manuscripts is equalled only by the joy experienced while comparing twelve versions of the same piece! This comparative study of phraseology and finger patterns has been a most enlightening exercise. While there are many small variations from an example to another, all remain for the most part very similar with two notable exceptions: the second London version (p.78) wherein the repeated sections are written out in an ornamental fashion, and the Moscow version which is essentially the same piece written in diminution, the quaver values replacing the crotchets. I would then recommend that in a performance the bourree appear in both the original and the diminutive (*double*) forms. The use of a minuet as a final movement gave cause for some concern, alleviated largely by the discovery of a theme of such beauty. This *Menuet* brings to mind so perfectly the "all-encompassing, pleasant and satisfying" universe of d minor as described by Mattheson. One is always left with the irrepensible urge to play the minuet a second time with scarcely a consideration for the so-called problems of musical redundancy.

### Sonata no 10 in B flat major (WeissSW 15)

Though present in its entirety in the Warsaw Manuscript, only half of the tenth sonata is contained in the Dresden version. This same half of the sonata is attached to three movements taken from the large *Divertimento à solo* (London ms pages 224 to 232), the totality of which are to be construed as a separate sonata in Dresden. Here we find two autograph movements, namely the allemande and the courante. "This key is both sumptuous and entertaining while retaining a certain modesty; it can appear to be simultaneously magnificent and endearing. Among other qualities attributed to it we must be mindful of this one: *Ad ardua animam elevat*". These are the words used by Mattheson to describe the key of B flat major in his list of 'tonartencharakteristik', a text that is heavily overlaid with French expressions such as 'divertissante', 'modeste', 'magnifique' and 'mignonne'.

From the very beginning of the *Allemande* we sense a presence of nobility infused with calm, due in large measure to the affirmative usage of the lower register. This creates a very different atmosphere from what we would expect to find in a darker minor key. Compare, for example, this opening with that of the allemande from the fifth sonata, which is surprisingly similar but much more sombre. Weiss's allemandes share certain interminable qualities with some of the works of Schubert. These long durations do allow us, though, to experience completely a peaceful dream-like quality inherent in the music. The next piece, a lively courante (*Cour:*), is somewhat reminiscent of a slalom course with its interesting mixture of equal quavers and triplets. In the Dresden version the tempo is indicated

*moderato* and all the triplets are replaced with the rhythmic figure  which gives a minuet allure to the piece ! Interestingly enough, with the new musical expression of the late Baroque, the two rhythmic figures tend to be differentiated from each other, whereas before they would be similar since the triplets were played unevenly.

The dance-like *Paisane* is very festive in spirit. It should be noted in passing that the sonatas 10, 11 and 12 have a *paysanne* movement (but no prelude) and that no movements are presented in the minor mode. The sarabande (*Sarab:* ) is neither excessively dramatic nor jesting, retaining rather an element of charming good taste. The *Menuet* is equally graceful in a slightly headstrong way. Eloquent long phrases, complete with all the panache and majesty of an imposing speech, are reserved for the final *Gigue* movement.

#### Sonata no 11 in A major (WeissSW 16)

Of the six movements of this sonata, all but the pastorale can be found in other manuscripts. The Vienna and Dresden versions contain all five of the other movements while replacing the pastorale with the gigue from the eighth sonata. The Podebrady and Haslemere manuscripts have two pieces each. The London copy is written entirely in the hand of the composer. The Vienna and Dresden manuscripts are entitled, respectively, *Partita Mons. Weis* and *Suonata del Sigre S.L.Weifs*. As Tim Crawford pointed out, this sonata could be called the "Weiss Christmas sonata". Pastorales, *paysannes* and echo effects were indeed associated with the theme of the Nativity. As with the eighth sonata, I have not found that the key of A major has inspired the passions described by Mattheson, with the possible exception of the allemande which offers, truthfully enough, moments of melancholy. I have not however given the complete quotation of this author who goes on to explain that "A major is very appropriate for the violin". It is also my belief that Mattheson was in the habit of describing tonalities with a view to their orchestral context.

The allemande (*Allem:* ) begins in melancholy while at the same time conveying an imposing assurance of majesty. As is the case with its analogous movement in the preceding sonata, the lower register is used profusely. This holds equally true for the other movements of the sonata, with the composer seemingly drawing enormous pleasure from the resultant richness of timbre. The *Air en echo* comes as a bit of a surprise since it is sub-titled as *Largo* whereas in the other three manuscripts it is clearly indicated as *Vivace*. What is one to make of this ? Four considerations should be taken into account. First, the air occupies the same space normally reserved for a courante and is in three of four sources marked *Vivace*. Secondly, the score of this "echo" piece alternates continuously and clearly between *f* and *p* (loud and soft), which is extremely difficult to realise at a quick tempo (even the more so when the ornamentations are brought to bear). Thirdly, let's not forget that for the 17<sup>th</sup> century lutenists, it was normal to play sometimes a piece in completely different tempi. A good example is the *Testament de Mézangeau*, an allemande by Ennemond Gautier however convincingly presented as a gigue in other manuscripts. Ideally, one might play the piece twice in a row, very slow and very fast. The fourth consideration is quite simply that the piece has all the essential ingredients (accents, phrase lengths, etc.) of a minuet. All things considered, a performance of this piece at a largo tempo would seem inappropriately slow coming after an allemande while a vivace tempo would be too rapid. My preferred compromise solution to date has been to perform the work as a moderate courante, close in spirit to the feel of a minuet.

The *Paisañe* is very lively, incorporating a regular alternation between leaping thematic ideas and short fleeting lyric themes. Appearing as it does in four different sources, there are four different articulations indicated for one of the phrases in this work:



In my opinion this underscores once more the fact that finer interpretational details were left to the discretion of the performer. Serenity, calm, and simplicity are the hallmarks of the sarabande (*Sarab:* ), wherein the first measure reminds us in all respects (except register - it is much lower here) of its equivalent movement in the fourth sonata. Meanwhile, the frivolous minuet (*Men:* ), which bears the sub-title *Madame la Grondeuse* (the scolding woman) in the Vienna version reminds one, in a melodic sense, of a game of leap-frog that is constantly being interrupted by a grumpy person, characterised by the descending bass figure. The delightful concluding *Pastorrell* is in 6/8, in the manner of a gigue with a rustic rhythmic figure of , substituting for the more usual continuous flow of notes commonly associated with the aforementioned dance form. This piece is unusual (perhaps the spirit of Christmas) in that it is constructed with one entirely repeated section whereas the conventional format would require the usage of two repeated sections.

#### Sonata no 12 in C major (WeissSW 17)

The Salzburg Manuscript, which is the only alternate source for this sonata is in such deteriorated state (at least, according to the microfilms received) that the deciphering of this music is arduous. This Salzburg source contains 46 *Parties* and 4 *Concertos da camera*, all clearly numbered and intended for trio ensemble, as every work bears at the beginning *Liutho, violino è basso* (except one adding up a mandora). Eight of these partitas are from Silvius Leopold and more than twenty are from a certain Fichtel, who might become one day, who knows? a better known composer when his music get better observation, like Weiss. I have nevertheless discerned a version that is remarkably similar to that of the London Manuscript, which in the margin of the first page bears an inscription by the author stating "veritable original. S. L. Weiss". As for the tenth sonata, the allemande and courante are in Weiss's hand, the rest of the sonata having been written by an assistant.

The key of C major was described at the time as follows: "This tonality has a strong forward character but is not entirely unresponsive to those moments of rejoicing where one ordinarily gives free rein to happiness. An able composer, after having chosen wisely his accompanying instruments, can make of it a work of charm and can apply it equally easily to the creation of tender moments." The ambivalent scene thus painted is actually quite close to the description of D major.

As always, the repeats of each section should be ornamented, particularly those of the allemande (*Allem:* ). Without recourse to frequent modulation, the piece retains an eloquence of musical gesture. What is true of the interpretation of the written notes holds equally for the ornamentation. An unsuspected universe of expressive possibilities becomes apparent only when the instrument is actually in hand. Likewise for the ornamentation; the mixture of open strings and stopped notes combine with the fortuitous disposition of the left hand to create breathtaking flourishes that would have been unimaginable from a simple visual reading of the music. The player should not be surprised by certain personal ornamental passages that appear to transcend the time period in question. These flourishes are quite natural, coming as they do directly from the instrument and not simply as the result of an unbridled impulsiveness. In this respect performers could adopt a typically Weissian creative strategy by composing idiomatically correct motives, often imitating melodic patterns found in

his other works. A final word on the allemande; the apparent relationship between this piece and the preceding allemande is due to the identical bass line in the first three measures.

The rather voluble *Courante* that follows presents also the same bass line in relation to the courante of the first sonata. Here a repeated-note motif, however, is used as a dynamic element. This piece is followed by a cheery exhilarating *Bourree* that, as with the concluding paysanne, does not have a title inscribed at the beginning of the score, a fact which is somewhat surprising and quite rare. Though easy to deduce on stylistic grounds, final confirmation that these pieces are a bourrée and a paysanne comes from the Salzburg Manuscript in which these movements are identified as such. The terms mellowness, femininity, lightness and elegance best describe the *Sarabande*. As stated by the Dresden lutenist André Burguete, these qualities encapsulate the Dresden of the time, a flamboyant example of French and Italian influences co-existing in perfect equilibrium. It is not surprising, then, to learn that Weiss was very much at home here, and chose to remain despite some temptingly exorbitant offers from other princely courts.

The *Menuet* is one of the rapid variety which, with their thin harmonies and interchangeable voicings, are in contrast with the other minuets containing as they do, continuous soprano melodies and discrete accompanying voices (discretely written but nonetheless sonorous!). The latter sort might be played at a moderate speed. This minuet, for example, is comparable with that of the fourth sonata. Both the dimensions of the *Paysanne* and its resolute proud nature give adequate justification for its placement as a final movement and not a middle movement, as is the case with the paysannes of the sonatas nos 10 and 11.

### [Sonata no 13 in D major \(WeissSW 18\)](#)

The solo sonata no 13 inaugurates a series of five sonatas that are found in the middle of the London Manuscript. The year of composition, 1719, was a particularly fecund one, especially when one bears in mind that three other isolated pieces found in the manuscript bear the same date of completion. These five sonatas were written in the hand of two copyists, but as is frequently the case in this manuscript, the correspondence between a specific handwriting and a particular piece is not always regular (see the General context section). Most movements are post-scripted *Weis* or *Weis 1719* or *S.L.Weis 1719*. Another typographical curiosity is the consistent use of a single 's' up to the last four signatures where upon we note the use of *Weiss*, as found systematically in the Dresden manuscript.

In the Vienna Manuscript this sonata begins with the prelude of the Second Sonata and ends with the angloise, omitting in the process the passacaille (which is nonetheless contained in the Haslemere Ms.). As I said in the General context, it would be quite natural, even necessary, here as for any other sonata having no prelude, to concoct one from ideas taken from the other movements. The D major tonality was described in my presentation of Sonata no 2 as a key with two opposing characters; the one "*brilliant and forthright*", the other "*delicate during calm moments*". These calm moments seem to be found only in the allemande and at the beginning of the passacaille, the sarabande being more of a nervous and feverishly agitated disposition. In the *Allemande*, which begins with a typically Weissian harmonic pattern, one cannot fail to notice the usage of parallel octaves in the classical style, suggestive to some extent of the use of this device in the music of Haydn and Mozart. Whilst working on an allemande written by Weiss one can imagine the making of a crystal sculpture. Each note must be carefully chiselled with the appropriate tone colour in the way that the reflections of light on a crystal surface would be affected by the trimming of the glass.

 Courante (*Cour:*) is bound to leave the performer feeling a bit breathless due to the inherent virtuosity of the work. In three of the five manuscripts the *Angloise* is titled as such (London, Vienna, Buenos Aires) but on two copies (2nd copy Vienna, Warsaw) the piece is listed as a paysanne. This work, characterised by fresh, short phrases, in contrast to the long elaborate gestures found in the courante, shows the extent to which a lighter interlude can lift the mood of a predominantly serious sonata like this one. The construction of this oeuvre appears more Classic than Baroque, indeed it has an allure quite redolent of Haydn himself. The seamless flow of 'notes égales' and 'notes inégales' is dictated naturally by the inherent musical and technical features of the work. Indeed the right hand

fingerings beckon us to spontaneously perform the rhythm  as opposed to the strictly notated version , which, if performed relentlessly, would no doubt cause considerable boredom, unless it is very fast. Alternate sources of this piece have yielded a pleasant surprise. My intuitive desire to repeat a two-bar pattern found near the end of the first section has been justified in that one of the Vienna manuscripts contains a strictly notated version of this repetition. The second section begins with a harmonic progression based on the pentatonic scale that is curiously reminiscent of a rock&roll cliché.

Technically speaking, the sarabande (*Sarab:*) is fairly difficult in that it requires a constant legato touch, interrupted only by the repeats. The necessary legato technique requires extraordinary finger dexterity in the left hand. The ornate ending to the repeat of the first section, which extends beyond the normal measure, was indeed notated as such, and not arbitrarily modified, confirming once more the degree to which rhythmic  as permitted in the service of higher musical expression. The *Menuet* certainly brings to mind the 'warrior' imagery used by Mattheson to describe the key of D major. The opening bars of the minuet and the sarabande are melodically identical, though rhythmically different. This opening theme re-appears at the end in what is called a 'hidden theme' (the fugitive reappearance of the first theme). The first measure also appears in another minuet by Weiss.

All guitarists are familiar with the concluding *Passagaille*, which reveals admirable compositional maturity in full flower. This passacaglia, provided that one plays all the repeats, including the one of the concluding section - as written-, evolves through a steady increase in dramatic tension which, while uplifting, is yet well-controlled, one of the few pieces in this large volume to have been performed by numerous artists. The work can be found in the syllabi of most guitar classes the world over. One of the most appealing attributes of this composition lies in the versatility of the bass line, with its continuous syncopations giving forward propulsion to the musical discourse.

### [Sonata no 14 in F major \(WeissSW 19\)](#)

Excerpts from this sonata may be found in the Munich, Rostock and Warsaw manuscripts. It recalls the first sonata, as much by the choice of key as by the compositional technique. The pitch of F seems to have provided all the inspiration necessary to depict the gentle nobility attributed by scholars of the time to F major. A brief *Prelud:*, harmonically audacious although reminiscent of the purest improvisation, is followed by an *Allemande* of striking nobility. As is often the case, the listener becomes overwhelmed by a dream-like state within a few moments of the opening of the work. In the second section, an ambiguous melodic line hovers gracefully between tonic and dominant key centres, a Weissian gem that is all the more delightful because of the way it precedes a more typically Baroque chord progression. Weiss has seemingly intoxicated himself with joy at the sound of his instrument, as would have been equally true of Louis Couperin with respect to the harpsichord.

It is noteworthy that this allemande has no sectional repetitions. Unusual as this may be, it does not appear to have been an oversight. Although I have opted most of the time in my concerts not to do repeats, I do ornament the written music in a manner suggestive of the second time through a repeated section. This does not constitute a divergence from the original text, rather an embellishment of same as is the case with other works in this collection where one can omit repeats occasionally been due to time restrictions (usually with respect to allemandes and sarabandes only). This particular allemande, in F, has a rather substantial 'petite reprise' at the end, which is, in this case at least, well indicated. One passage in particular is evocative of the initial ascending melody found in the allemande of the second sonata.

The triumphant exuberance of the courante (**Cour:**) is characterised by clever hemiola writing (binary rhythms superimposed on ternary values) and by the use of off-beat secondary melodies. There is also a certain obvious playfulness to be found in the tension between strong and weak beat tied values. This same spirit of joy can be found in the subsequent **Bourée** with all of its intricate right-hand thumb leaps. We cannot fail to notice that in the two examples from the Rostock library, the ornamentations are not only different from but also more difficult than the London version, leading us to believe that the owners of these manuscripts were either great virtuosi or that the movement in question was played by them at a more restrained tempo.

The sarabande (**Sarab:**) is in itself somewhat enigmatic. It begins, in effect with a double surprise, in that the key is in the relative minor while the opening manages to dodge the expected affirmation of the tonic, truly a refined melancholic gem. Placid joy returns in the form of a **Menuet** in which we detect thematic kinship with the well known Minuet in G by J.S.Bach, part of the second Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach which would be composed 6 years later in 1725. Immediately prior to the conclusion of the work, a descending line brings to mind the Musette from the same Notebook. The concluding **Gigue**, with its tightly woven fugato and continuous modulations, imposes a large technical challenge on the interpreter. Extensive use of string dampening is required to ensure a coherent interpretation. Some of the measures found in the gigue recall Weiss's penchant for creating multiple polyphonic lines from single melodic voices, aided, of course by the use of carefully reasoned fingering choices. At other times it becomes quite clear that the fingering choices were made solely in the light of timbral considerations.

#### Sonata no 15 in F minor (WeissSW 21)

Here our discrepancies with the Smith-Crawford numbering system come to an end. The difference between the two systems is due to the fact that I have chosen for the moment to by-pass a fifth (and ultimate) duo-sonata in D minor, opting instead to combine it with the four others which will be presented at the end of this analysis, along with the incomplete sonata *WeissSW 4* and the individual pieces.

*"This tonality appears temperate and peaceful, while at the same time deep and oppressive, with a touch of despair giving the impression of mortal anguish, though in an highly excitable state. It truly expresses a bleak melancholy giving rise to shudders and tremblings in the listener."* This description of F minor by Mattheson would seem particularly à propos since this music expresses bravura of the most breathtaking vigour, in short a musical excitement causing an uninterrupted stirring of sombre musical ideas. The Dresden Manuscript contains the same sonata in its entirety from which one can, as is often the case, choose several interesting variants, especially for the sarabande. In the London Manuscript, this last is placed, astonishingly enough and following J.S.Bach's fashion, before the bourrée. From the **Allemande** onward, the chosen key causes unusual left hand positionings. One can imagine that the composer was experimenting with instrumental resonance, a unique relationship between his playing and the harmonic vibration from the wood of the instrument. There is, near the end of the composition, a cadential chord with a low contra E on the tenth course requiring an index finger bar that covers eighteen strings! This is one of those positions that would indicate clearly the use of a standard lute, as opposed to a theorbo-lute, as is also true of the Tenth Sonata *WeissSW 15*. This long suspended chord justifies Mattheson's description, causing indeed a 'shivering' sensation.

The subsequent **Courante** (the same spelling appears in the Dresden Manuscript) has also an abundance of syncopated inner voices. In this case the writing causes enormous left-hand fatigue, induced by the flatted notes and the resultant need for constant barring. The courante emits a certain energy imbued with fatalism, the energy of despair, as it were. This sense of despair is equally present in the **Sarabande**, indicated as an *adagio*, a veritable cry from the heart as is also the case with the sarabande from the Eighth Sonata *WeissSW 12*. The principle theme reminds us of Bach and Schubert. We can detect once again an anticipation of the Classic style in the long pedal points that support the languidly flowing passage of thirds. Both the **Bourée** and the minuet, with their agitated sense of darkness, conform to the ideal of F minor. The indication **Tempo di Menueto** ascribed to the minuet is quite possibly intended to guard the performer from becoming unduly zealous in the pursuit of agitation. The same is true of the **Gigue** which nonetheless presents itself in terms of an attractive elegance. More so than ever the composer indulges in progressions of modulations to remote key areas, giving strong evidence of his desire to make of each sonata a unique statement, notwithstanding the discrete and conventional nature of the musical language. This he appears to do whilst making light of the technical difficulties frequently encountered in this music. We can well empathise with Princess Sophie Wilhelmine, sister of Frederick II of Prussia and student of Weiss, who opined that he *"never had an equal and that his successors must remain content to imitate him"*.

#### Sonata no 16 in G major (WeissSW 22)

This grand sonata in G major differs from the previous fifteen by means of a non-standard beginning comprised of a prelude, toccata and fugue. It should be mentioned that, with the exception of two bars of the toccata which can be found in the 1769 Breitkopf catalogue, and the allegro (Moscow) this sonata exists only in the London Manuscript. There are eight movements in all, although in reality the first three constitute separate sections of larger overture movement. This compression of movements attenuates what could otherwise be perceived as an excessively lengthy eight-movement form. The concluding portions of all five subsequent pieces are duly signed S.L.Weiss 1719. We note also that only one of the five copyists engaged for the London Manuscript has been used in the preparation of Sonatas 16 and 17.

Mattheson said of G major that it *"possessed a strength of suggestive evocation, being the ideal key for a work imbued with vitality."* It is difficult to find a better description of the sixteenth sonata with its strong evocative grandeur and light vitality; characteristics which are even more prevalent in this work than in the other G major sonata (solo no 4, *WeissSW 5*) of the London ms.

The **Preludie** begins with nine unmeasured chords, giving plenty of leeway for interpretational freedom. An abundance of arpeggios allows for a brilliant departure, announcing with a grand gesture the outline of the forthcoming fugue themes in addition to material from other movements. These 'nervous' arpeggios should not, in my view, go beyond a certain elasticity within a chosen rhythm. In any case these chord progressions are similar to those found in the preludes of solo sonatas 1 and 8 which are notated with values of crotchets and

minims. The short development which follows is also similar to several other passages from preludes by Weiss who, as an announcement of the toccata and fugue, apparently wanted nothing more than a brief introductory passage to check the tuning of the instrument, a performance practice common to seventeenth century lutenists. One can enhance the resonance and richness of the apparent harmonic structure by slowing down the performance of these simple salvos of semi-quavers.

Where we might expect panache, the *Toccata* gives us instead an impression of solemn majesty, conveyed most effectively by the gravity and brilliance of the chosen harmony. In the Breitkopf catalogue the expressive marking is listed as *Adagio*. These two sections of the overture, the first frenetic and the second ponderous, lead us inexorably to the 'piece de resistance', the *Fuga*. This work, with its sense of magnanimous vitality concludes, nevertheless, with a return to a slow regal finale, in the tradition of the French Overture, indicated also as *Adagio*. The theme is reminiscent of similar melodic material used in one of the organ fugues by J. S. Bach, and also in the Prelude, Fugue and Allegro BWV 998 "*for either lute or harpsichord*". In the case of the aforementioned work, clearly composed with lute technique in mind, Bach seems to follow the idiomatic model offered by Weiss, involving as it does the usage of long values for the theme, superimposed voices in medium durations and rapid arpeggiations in the development. In this particular case, however, Weiss remains deliberately restrained, calling for brief though jubilant arpeggiated sections. Bach would treat similar material with a view to maximising the musical importance of each and every section. A remarkable example of 'orchestral' colour gradation can be found between bars 129 and 137. An uninterrupted series of bass tones creates a progressive thickening in the sonority, each open string contributing a unique colour to the tonal palette. The ending of another chord progression involves the use of an interesting chromatic bass motion that extends to the last possible note on the fingerboard, a contra C#. The written repeats come as a bit of a surprise, repeat indications that lead me to question the significance of these markings which are often found in similar circumstances throughout the work of Weiss. Like Robert Donington, I would give as best explanation that they meant an optional repetition. If we try indeed to think the same way an amateur did in this time, we can imagine that a fugue could be often asked as an encore by the listeners, due to the complexity of the work and the greater difficulty for the auditors to remember the themes and counter-themes. We could then call this an 'anticipated encore'!

As was the case in the thirteenth sonata, the courante (*Cour* : ) in this sonata is written in long phrases using repetitive, charming melodic cells that allow for pleasing modulations. In the *Bouree* certain harmonico-melodic formulae are revealed which anticipate the paysanne of *The Infidel* (solo sonata no 23, *WeissSW 29*). Certainly Weiss was not lacking in inspiration when composing in the style of a bourrée, a fact that is confirmed when one appreciates to the fullest the elastic ricochet of the quaver motion inherent in this movement. The bourrée was a dance form supposedly associated originally with the jumping movements of drunken dancers in the village feasts of the Auvergne who were said to be "bourré" or "stuffed/full". A *petite reprise* added by editorial decision would be welcome here. To give an idea of the frequency of use of these repetitions, it can be mentioned that of the eighteen pieces of sonatas 16 and 17, I personally make use of nine: six were indicated by Weiss while three are of my choosing. This practice of adding a *petite reprise* varies greatly from one sonata to another, and we can even sometimes avoid it if we feel like it. Preludes, fugues and toccatas are, for obvious reasons, not susceptible to this treatment. Among the other movements, some are possibly not immediately receptive to the addition of epilogues, while others benefit greatly by this extra weight in the musical discourse. In any event, this aspect of ornamented repetition is one of the most important elements of the Weissian sonata.

The *Sarabande*, presented by three voices in close position in the key of the relative minor has been subtitled *un poco andante*. The driving bass reminds us more of a march than in the case with the usual sarabande. The first section, which should typically be one half the length of the second, is in this instance almost of equal duration (20 bars as opposed to 21), though it is true that the petite reprise does lengthen somewhat the second part. In addition, this sarabande is much longer (at least in terms of the number of measures) than the others. The rhythmic flow, and for that matter the entire atmosphere of the piece, depends greatly on the personal choices made in the interpretation of the sign  that refers to upper appoggiatura, whether single or multiple (trill), slow or fast and , used to indicate all of the same in lower appoggiatura. This notation is found in all of Weiss's tablature but the attractiveness of this work will depend to an even greater extent than usual on the interpretational decisions of the performer with respect to the ornamentation, even in the first time through repeated sections. The dramatic ending necessitates, in my view, a very emotional ornamentation treatment, that is: an unfurling of *diminutions*. The words used by Mattheson to describe the key of E minor depict very accurately this particular sarabande when he states "*If this tone accepts with difficulty any added gaiety due to its profound sense of introspective tristesse, one can nevertheless cultivate therein an element of hope. A certain vigour would help greatly in this respect, although the desired luminescence must remain unattainable*".

The *Menuet* is thoroughly charming, showing to what extent the left hand slurs contribute to musical expression. The *Allegro*, presaging as it does the presto of the *Celebrated Pirate* (solo sonata no 22, *WeissSW 28*) is nothing short of a relentlessly mad race. Again, vitality is central to the description of this brilliant work, which is so stylistically linked to the Italian Baroque. The ones present at the 1987 LSA seminar in Raleigh will always remember the vertiginous interpretation of this work by Nigel North at his no less incredible Baroque lute concert, a magical state of grace.

#### [Sonata no 17 in Bb major "Divertimento à solo" \(WeissSW 23\)](#)

This work is unique in that it is the only piece among the twenty-six solo sonatas and five duo-sonatas of the London ms that has been given a generic name. As was the case with the sixteenth sonata, no 17 could appear to have an overabundance of movements. Closer examination reveals that this is not the case. In actual fact, the Entrée is a close copy of the allemande, and the Saltarella sounds like a leaping gigue, all of which would indicate a perfectly logical movement flow since the six central ones are assembled in pairs, giving us the equivalent of seven 'real' movements. Though Weiss did not actually write Bourree I, Bourree II, etc. as he did in sonatas no 3 and 25, the composer's intention remains quite obvious in this respect. Usage of this reference formula was common with Baroque composers. If the Bourree I, Gavotte I and Minuet I were to be presented as isolated works, in the manner shown by the Dresden ms (the Bourree I also appears in the Munich ms) we would be left with an impoverished musical structure. Amputation of the second piece, which both allows for and makes compulsory the da capo reprise, would have the undesirable side effect of reducing the role of the first piece for that of a brief ditty.

Seen first with respect to the tenth sonata, the description of Bb major by Mattheson seems even more pertinent in the context of this work, with its "*grandeur through simplicity*". Mattheson would doubtless approve of Weiss's use of the title 'Divertimento' for a sonata in Bb since it is the French sense of 'divertissant' (to divert, entertain) that would seem most appropriate to him. I also agree with Mattheson's use of the terms 'sumptuous' and 'modest' to describe the *Praelude*, which, as is the case with so many other preludes, seems

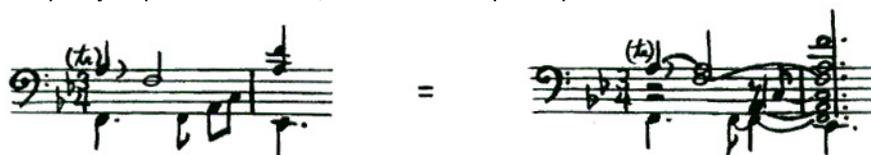
to exist only to create an appropriate mood for the listener. A touch of *notes inégales* lightens the first bars, seemingly sounding "Hear ye! Hear ye!" as a commencement to the musical discourse.

With all of the agogic inflections of the allemande, including some moments of tenderness, the *Entrée* is in fact less elaborate than the preceding allemandes, sparing us the sensation of a long dream. We find in it some melodic contours and a five-note initial chord that prefigure the allemande of the twenty-second sonata mentioned earlier. Other melodic configurations serve as premonitions of the *Entrée* found in *The Infidel*. In addition to ornamentation of the repeats, it would seem appropriate to begin each section by squeezing the anacrusis closer to the bar line, giving it more of a semiquaver feel as opposed to a quaver.

The first *Bourrée* and the second *Bourrée* are not preceded by a courante, a somewhat surprising turn of events since the first sixteen solo sonatas all have one (even no 11, with its ambiguous *Air en echo* serving the same function). It comes as an even greater surprise to note that of the ten remaining solo sonatas only three contain courante movements. After the sixteenth sonata the composer seems to have entered a second 'phase' of the London ms, characterised by 'broken moulds', unusual movements (rigaudon, passepied, musette, presto) and unconventional movement arrays. A manifest desire to break with convention would preoccupy Weiss from this point onward.

A single reading confirms that, as was stated previously, if the two bourrées were not written together, they were at the very least intended to be performed side by side. The second answers the first by means of a certain complementarity of musical atmosphere and development. The beginning of the second, with its harmonic structure of I-V-VI rather than I-V-I only makes sense in terms of a continuation of the first bourrée. This use of a coherent whole in two sections is shown to similar advantage in the gavottes and minuets. One notices in bourrée II some very judiciously chosen right hand fingerings, chosen to enhance the proper accentuation. The full beauty of the first *Gavotte* and the second *Gavotte*, involving as they do the resonances of suspended harp-like string sonorities, can only be revealed by the original instrument. Again this richness of sound is not immediately evident when reading (as opposed to playing) the score. The difference in time signature between the gavottes (no 2 is in 2/2 and no 1 in 2/4) provides justification for a softening of accent in the second, illustrating again the complementary relationship of the works. This softening of accent facilitates alternation between the graceful triplets of gavotte II, and the hammered rhythms of gavotte I. The two bourrées and two gavottes all have final repeats. We also note that these of the second bourrée and second gavotte are shorter than their first movement counterparts. This symmetry also reinforces the equilibrium of the entire work.

The *Sarabande* exerts a calming effect in the midst of more agitated flights of fancy. This time the proportions are more modest without the long anguished phrases that characterise the sarabande of the previous sonata. This meagreness of musical text is, paradoxically, ideal for the realisation of certain elegant arabesques, in the style of certain harpsichord pieces by Louis Couperin. Looking closely at the second part, the tablature confirms the essential features of this research into superposed sonorities. The resultant increase in musical tension is achieved with a deceptively simple musical notation, as we see in the sequential pattern of measure 17:



In lute music a bass line will often sound like two simultaneous and complete musical voices. This polyphonic aspect must be realised and controlled with great care in order to fully do justice to the 'real' piece, one that is often obscured by the written notation.

The first *Menuet*, which can be ornamented with diminutions similar to those of the first gavotte, might be readily enhanced by the use of *notes inégales*, including the lombard rhythm (inverted *inégales*) in the descending lines. Guitarists will find especially interesting the slurred technique just before the end of the second section. This method of straddling the strings actually prefigures the technique used a century and a half later by the famous guitarist/composer Francesco Tarrega. In those measures with second beat minims, a sharp attack on first beat chords will create a desirable effect. C.P.E. Bach in particular was careful to explain that baroque scores were intentionally imprecise with durations being dependant on the context of the phrase. Certain notes can even be played extremely staccato.

As with the second gavotte, the second *Menuet* is presented in a different meter; 3/8 instead of 3/4. This helps to convey the flowing nature of the phrases, in contrast with the leaping themes of the first minuet. With the exception of measures three to five one is obliged to cease accentuating the second beat that is so typical of a minuet. In the second section we encounter a type of echo created by the mixture of strings in high position whilst seemingly travelling through a violent but brief thunderstorm. Most would concede that the resultant sound is not unlike that of a "phlanged" electric guitar! The return to a light touch is both swiftly achieved and natural, bringing Mozart to mind. The graceful concluding *Saltarella* is an exquisite little gigue full of the rebounding joyfulness implicit in the latinesque cognate of the title (saltare - to dance).

#### Sonata no 18 in C major (WeissSW 24)

The solo sonata no 18 exists only in the London version (in a copyist handwriting), discounting the minuet and trio which can be found as part of another sonata in C in the Dresden manuscript, written in Weiss's hand. A copy of the minuet without the trio can also be found in the Munich manuscript. Mattheson described the key of C Major as "*bold but willingly joyful and even tender when necessary*" (see solo sonata 12).

The full noblesse of the *Ouverture* replaces, in this instance, the two more typical movements of the Weissian sonata: the allemande and courante. 'Ouverture a la francaise' would be an appropriate designation for this movement in slow-fast-slow structure. This orchestral sounding work could have come from the pen of Haendel. On the other hand, the rhythmic motif of the fast theme could be heard as almost identical to (albeit in Major) the thematic material of the preludes to Bach's suites no 1 and 3 for lute. (This is certainly not the only example of musical similarities between these masters of Leipzig, Dresden and London.) As is the case with the two aforementioned colleagues, Weiss demonstrates a total mastery of all facets of his art. His choice of developmental modulations and the balance of structure provide convincing, refined testament to the sensitivity of his approach. As usual, nothing has to be altered, though it might be necessary to exaggerate the dotted values of certain notes in the two slow sections, increasing thereby the majesty of the musical gesture. As one among many examples of polished writing, the hemiola superposed on normal rhythm before the return of the slow section constitutes a slowing of the intermediary line without a change in time signature, since the two other voices remain normally accented:



The *Bourée* (which becomes the second movement under the circumstances previously described) is extremely polyphonic while remaining essentially dance-like with a cantabile character. The initial melodic line anticipates the sarabande which will follow and one finds herein the echo effect that will become the official mainstay of the sonata no 20 *WeissSW 26*, a device that was to be used more systematically by Weiss during this stage of his development. These fragments, which are repeated here and there should not be seen as symptomatic of a paucity of imagination, or as the result of directionless improvisation. Rather, they could suggest a desire on the part of the composer to manipulate dynamic shadings, most particularly the *Forte / Piano* technique which was to become an essential ingredient of the classic style. In my opinion, the lutenist should treat these thematic repetitions as opportunities to create dynamic contrast, using the appropriate Baroque right-hand technique. Otherwise the subtleties of shading could become non-existent or severely weakened, or replaced by an overuse of rubato.

While reaffirming the practical superiority of tablature notation, it is at the same time interesting to note an example of the inadequacy of any notational system when it comes to creating a graphic realisation of the lute soundscape. The moment in question occurs at the end of the first part of the bourree, a musical gesture that could be notationally correct only if presented in a form of elaborate orchestral scoring. Even this ideal form of writing would not convey the effect that the sustained resonance tones have on the listener, an effect that allows one to reconstruct the aural image in his or her manner. These sequentially sustained harp-like tones bring to mind the reconstitution of melodic lines according to ones disposition. (See Appendix 1). This example would sound:



One notes that the A of the preceding measure, residing on a neighbouring string, will resonate during the last measure, leaving the listener the freedom to determine whether or not this straddling constitutes an *appoggiatura* of the last G.

As usual, the sarabande occupies a central position in the sonata, this time being titled *Aria*, with a performance direction of *un poco andante*. This can also be seen as part of the classical temperament residing in the imagination of the composer. Another classical element can be found in the use of notated silences, a rarity in tablature scoring, used presumably to express a well defined stop in the musical line. The complete repetition of the opening theme just before the end of the piece serves as yet another precursor to the music of the Age of Enlightenment. The *Menuet* is unassumingly charming, leaving rhetorical flourish for the *Trio* which, while appearing suddenly in c minor, immediately transports the listener to the depths of morosity, albeit with a certain gracefulness. The *Da capo* repetition, as asked in the score, of the minuet seems by contrast light and playful. The concluding movement is a 9/8 *Gigue*, as opposed to one in 6/8, a feature that implies different phrase dynamics, to the point where the 9/8 flow is regularly interspersed with a 3/4 measure. Reminiscent of the Renaissance *Canario*, this delightful 'standardised hemiola' effect lends a certain joyous spirituality to this piquant final movement.

#### [Sonata no 19 in g minor \(WeissSW 25\)](#)

This sonata can also be found almost entirely intact in the Dresden Manuscript, though the sarabande is not the same. Unlike the London manuscript, the Dresden ms is an autograph copy and I have taken the liberty, however parsimoniously, to lift a few advantageous variants from it. These borrowings involve a few different notes, mostly in the bourree, used to enrich the harmony of a few measures. It should be specified that a prelude was added by a copyist, after the fact, to the Dresden ms but it could be judged unnecessary for a performance for reasons of discontinuity and brevity (it is only three lines long). Moreover, this prelude appears excessively conventional, consisting as it does of mere arpeggios, arpeggios that spring directly from another prelude (Dresden page 25). Mattheson's description of g minor, which speaks of 'moderate nostalgia' and 'peaceful joy', was seen to be rather inadequate when ascribed to the tormented, sombre sonata no 3. In the case of the nineteenth sonata, these moods are quite predominant. The 'petulant charm' that was spoken of by Mattheson is very apparent. In g minor, the tone a perfect fifth from the tonic (D) is quite prevalent due to the composition of the open strings, creating suspension effects over the bass in the finale of all six movements. This is yet another lute characteristic that is more discernible by the ear than the eye.

The first movement is entitled *Andante*, a more 'modern' nomenclature than *Allemande*, though identical in terms of tempo (not fast, but moving). The title of the Dresden equivalent is *Allem: andante*. From the very outset the tablature shows surprising left-hand dexterity due to the wide finger-stretches. One could conclude that Weiss was not troubled by problems of finger extensions! Even if this piece appears to be of a familiar writing style, there can also be found certain innovative agogic inflections. Voice doublings and chord spacings are perfect as always, revealing the full depth to which the composer 'heard' his instrument. These note doublings, whether by octave or unison, add an important element to the musical discourse through reinforcement of secondary harmonics, overtones that carry within themselves a lot of expressive power. As mentioned previously, these subtleties do not lend themselves to notational transcription. It is interesting to note different strata of string resonance (whether consonant or dissonant) as can be seen in this example:



These idiomatic utilisations of neighbouring string relationships, which evidently Weiss knew from memory, are all useful, resolving as they do very differently from each other and according to key choice. A performer must assimilate this information in order to recall it in such a way that the correct dynamic inflection is used during performance. At this point, it would seem worthwhile to show the bass line found at the beginning of the piece. The line seems at first glance to be dislocated but closer scrutiny shows that it is actually rich and full in its double tessitura:



Consistent with his concern for variety, Weiss replaces the expected courante movement with a lively mischievous *Passepied*. Quite different from a minuet, the movement is quick and uses an up-beat before the first measure of each section. There are periodically recurring doubled measures, a feature that permitted dancers to place one foot over the other ('passer le pied' or 'faire le pas'). Even after hearing enough of his bourrees to be convinced that Weiss was decidedly the master of the genre, it comes as an unrestrained surprise to discover here another **Bourree** that is distinguished by a delightful cheeriness. Musical phrases trace patterns like rocket flares to the accompaniment of sharply defined sustained rhythmic accentuation. The title, present in Dresden, is not in London. The eloquence of the *Sarabande* (related thematically to the sarabande of the Sonata no 7, *WeissSW 11*) becomes fully apparent through added ornamentation. Long suspensions give a monologue quality to the work, a soliloquy steeped in fatalism. Musical phrases are presented as successions of differing rhythmic panels. These musical atmospheres are different to the point of being occasionally paradoxical, a situation that is exacerbated by the ornamentation of the repeats. All of this contributes to a surprising, interesting musical statement.

The rhythm again confers a playful aspect to the minuet entitled here *La babillieuse en Menuet*. The prattling of our 'Chatterbox' (Babilieuse) is evoked by the alternation between 'notes inegales' and 'notes egales', a strategy that gives simultaneously a delightfully sensuous dislocation to the phrases while maintaining an aura of turbulence. Obviously, any 'straight' reading of this minuet would make it quite boring to listen to. The babbling aspect is preserved in the elongated trills, all of which are clearly notated in the score. An examination of the left-hand fingerings of the Dresden version shows some of the composer's intentions in the areas of phrase articulation and accentuation. The same could be said of the *Gigue* which gives right-hand fingerings as well. Notwithstanding a virtuosic use of the right-hand thumb, these fingerings demonstrate quite convincingly our view that these giges were not played as quickly as previously supposed, and that rich sonorities with plenty of ornamentation were probably highly favoured.

#### Sonata no 20 in D Major (WeissSW 26)

The seven first movements of this sonata are unique to the London Manuscript. The eighth can be found in the Warsaw ms (two copies, one bearing *Bourée*), in that of Prague, Ebenthal, Strasbourg and Venice (under *Ariette & La Tournée*) and Buenos Aires, under *bouree*, and also the Haslemere ms where it is titled *Capricio Pichler*. Could this last have been a composition by Pichler, whose name appears occasionally in other manuscripts of lute music, or was it possibly a dedicated work? Judging by the spirit and the writing style, plus the close resemblance with the Angloise of Sonata 13, it would seem to have been composed by Weiss. "Power", "brilliance" and, curiously enough "delicateness in calm moments" are attributes of D major, according to Mattheson. These descriptions are particularly apt in the case of this sonata which is best characterised as an exercise in unrestrained joy set in a context of strong thematic unity.

Only the **Prelude** (which has no title) is written in the hand of the composer. It appears to be the result of a spontaneous burst of inspiration, seemingly completely improvised. Weiss's autograph, by the way, is very eloquent, replete with long undulating lines; in short, a handwriting that is strong and passionately vital. It stands in marked contrast to the modest, functional calligraphy of his copyist, who penned the subsequent movements. In attempting to render justice to this improvisatory spirit, it is quite normal for the performer to make use of ample fluctuations of rhythm and accent. To do otherwise would seem to go against the intentions of the composer who deliberately omitted rhythmic indications for a large part of the score and to touch up in it some surprising modulatory junctions.

One hears in the *Marche* the peculiar sound of 'bass chimes' which occur in both sections. The sound of three bells, each with a different delivery can be heard as in the following example:



The trill indications are very precisely notated and one should, I think, scrupulously adhere to them. When listening to this music it is not hard to imagine a procession headed by Augustus the Strong in the gardens of his castle on the riverbanks of the Elbe at Dresden, with the stately progress accompanied by the resounding chimes of the neighbouring cathedral.

The *Gavotte*, described as a dance of 'small hops', does indeed jump in a lively fashion to the accompaniment of syncopated basses rebounding to cross-rhythms. This leaping effect is strongly accentuated near the end of the work if we engage the basses in a rhythmic displacement made by the ornamentation of the repetitions. Curiously, the tonic chord in root position has been avoided in the beginning portion of the piece. The maintenance of a full sound throughout the work, written in continuous three-voice texture, represents a significant challenge for the performer. The gavotte is not a quick piece and certain slurrings tend to prove that the tempo, in actual practice, was quite moderate. The subsequent *Aria*, a beautiful work subtitled *adagio* contains the kind of sublime moments often yearned for; a state of complete grace. The technique employed involves an harmonic progression appearing in both sections wherein the two upper voices slide tenderly in step-wise motion creating a musical ecstasy that is further enhanced through the addition of trills in the repeats. Other musical phrases present us with an exhilarating range of expression of symphonic grandeur. The harmonies used in at least three measures of the aria have been heard previously in the prelude. As observed in other movements, cadences are sometimes prolonged in the manner: V-VI, V-VI, V-I. This further aspect of thematic unity is certainly presented in the same spirit of dynamic play that was discussed with reference to the sonata no 18.

The *Menuet* uses accentuation in a manner similar to that of the gavotte. The music proceeds in units of two measures by two measures, the first of each pair being resolute - the other weak. The resulting music is particularly elegant, the lightness of the atmosphere leaving no hint of the dramatic sequence that will arise in the second section. Having established that the repetition of the first section was written, it remains to be explained that this is because of a repetition of the two last measures the second time through, a *petite reprise* indicated in advance, as it were. Nevertheless, a repeat marking is given at the double bar, an indication that could be deemed superfluous since this necessitates four presentations of the theme. The *Musette*, with its omnipresent pedal brings to mind a certain hybrid orchestral-bagpipe sound colour. The first attack, an idiomatic motif that will be repeated throughout, contains five simultaneous D's (distributed through three courses) that are supposed to sound like bugles. The piece would certainly seem undernourished were it not for these octave and unison doublings. It would be a good idea to intensify the bagpipe aspect by using double mordents and the Baroque *chute* effect.

(See Appendix 2). The performance also involves an investigation of expression through the use of dynamic effects, in particular the markings *f* and *p*.

Exceptional in its construction, the *Rondeau en Echo* follows an A-B-A-C-A with indications of *adagio* and *allegro* for, respectively the B and C sections, with A being implicitly on the quick side as well. The echo is realised through the use of *f* and *p* markings. The melody is light and is obscured by a second, sudden, section - another example of studied contrast.

The eighth piece in this large sonata, entitled *Comment Savez Vous?* is a perfect finale number with an especially joyful ritornello. It has all the inflections of an angloise (the angloise in D of the sonata no 13 is quite similar) even though it is listed as a *Bourrée* in two other manuscripts, as noted previously. While the Warsaw versions are quite close to that of the London ms, the Haslemere variant is somewhat different, though nonetheless attractive. The Buenos Aires version, on the other hand, appears to have been quickly transcribed, possibly in a careless manner, or, equally plausibly, from memory. (There are some basses not indicated, for example.) With its charming whistling melody, this concluding movement is quite a delightful gem, not unlike Couperin's *Les baricades mystérieuses*, which uses also an antecedent/consequent thematic construction. A small mystery is only elucidated when the piece is actually played. Whilst trying to account for the apparent absurdity of the title, I became aware that there was a hidden theme in the bass line - most particularly the melody of *Frere Jacques* ! (already present, noticeably, in the 'bells section' of the Marche). As an added bonus, the upper voice is evocative of the 'ringing morning bells'. This explains my decision to use this celebrated nursery melody to make a bridge before a full repeat, the logic of this choice being justified by the resultant similarity of the melodies. It is amusing to speculate that Weiss may have anticipated this discovery by his future listening audience who might well ask him "This tune, it reminds me of something, could it be Frere Jacques?" to which he might conceivably respond "Comment savez-vous?" (How do you know?).

### Sonata no 21 in C minor (WeissSW 27)

This sonata can also be found in the Dresden and Salzburg manuscripts, without the prelude, which is found here in Weiss's autograph. The sarabande is also missing in the Salzburg ms, replaced by another one. This version has two supplementary movements added to it. The gavotte and rigadon can also be found in the Munich ms. The seventh and eighth movements are, in reality, two constituent parts of a larger whole, a situation similar to that found in the solo sonata no 17, WeissSW 23.

In his meticulous description of C minor, Mattheson states that *"the tone is charming though rife with sadness. This first quality is nonetheless always dominant. Unless the work requires a more soporific interpretation, it would not be inappropriate to play it in a lively manner."* Other C minor works contained in the London Manuscript include a fantasia and the fifth sonata, WeissSW 7. A confident liveliness is declared by all three works, but only the sonata no 21 seems to be imbued with more charm than solemnity.

Indeed, even the *Praelude*, which is in the same improvisatory spirit as the analogous movement in the sonata no 20, is characterised by a pointedly dramatic discourse. A rising wave of arpeggios is presented, one which begins in the most sombre of moods, rising steadily towards the light, seemingly questioning life itself. The strong quill of Weiss, imposing and impressive to the eye, is mirrored in the flame of musical expression, revealing the full volcanic temperament of the genius at work. This prelude is unmeasured except, curiously enough, for one bar. At the beginning, it would appear that the composer wished to show the desired accentuation for the two initial arpeggios that surround an endearingly exclamatory seventh chord. If inclined to seek thematic associations, one can hear the beginning of the famous Bach bourree from the first lute sonata (BWV 996), outlined at the end of the prelude.

As is the case with the Salzburg ms, the *Allemande* is sub-titled *andante*. It is possible to feel, exactly as stated by Mattheson, that the inherent sadness of the tonality is carried away by the more charming aspects of the musical discourse; always present but at a lower level of importance. This remains true of all following movements – an aura of sadness is lightened by fluid, serene melodic tunes. The 'notes inégales' approach is the required procedure for performance of this attractive *Gavotte*, reminiscent as it is of the 17th century French lute style. Confirmation of the composer's intentions in this regard could be found in the usage of ties from weak beats to strong in certain measures. After comparing sources, one notes that for performance the Dresden version can be chosen for one measure of the principal theme due to a special richness of harmonic treatment. Aside from a few of these isolated moments, which seem to be born of a desire to improve the product (as will be seen in the allemande of *The Celebrated Pirate*), the overall impression remains that the London ms is the most carefully worked out of all versions, including the Dresden, especially at the level of harmonic detail and instrumental liaisons.

The *Rondeau*, which is evocative of certain Lully and Monteclair melodies, is structurally identical to the rondeau of sonata no 20, containing three sections with *Da Capo* repetitions of the theme. Here again we encounter the notion of melancholia being surpassed by musical charm. The audacious rhythmic leaps of the bass voice in the second part are noteworthy. A Weiss sarabande truly requires a high degree of reflective thought. From this rough outline, the performer is invited to cautiously bring forth a musical fruition. One is required to elucidate a coherent, eloquent musical discourse within the constraints of a deeply meditative atmosphere, a process which leads ultimately to the hidden truth revealed by correct accentuation and imaginative ornamentation. Indicated here as *Sarabanda*, the piece is in the relative major of C minor, E flat major, which Mattheson describes as *"corresponding well with serious subjects, favouring an expression of pathos"*, a remarkably accurate summation. Moreover, this sarabande provides an excellent vehicle for the expression of beautiful colourings, notably during the recurrent middle register theme with its interval of the major seventh on a dominant pedal. This is all presented, of course, with a certain appropriateness of *balancement*. This theme stirs the poetic imagination, with the passage of time seemingly arrested by the repetitious fraying of melodic cells. The Sarabandes reveal the musically contemplative aspect of Weiss's character.

Certain writing techniques found in this C minor sonata, particularly in the sarabande and *La belle Tiroloise*, are similar to those found in sonatas nos 22 and 23, giving fairly convincing evidence, in my opinion, of chronological closeness, matching the textual proximity of the works as found in the manuscript. The feverish *Menuet* stands out from the other movements with its wilful, even obstinate musical phrases while maintaining a 'hummable' lyricism that is easily retained in the memory of the listener. As mentioned earlier, the *Rigadon* and *La belle Tiroloise* form part of a larger unit, the latter being, for all practical purposes a second rigadon, with a clear *Da Capo* indication for the first. This dance movement is closely related to the gavotte, through similar accentuation and leaping motion and appears for the first time in the London Manuscript, although another variant appears in the Salzburg ms with a different spelling, *Rigedon* to be precise. (Dresden and Munich manuscripts list it as *Rigaudon*). Our *Tiroloise* is listed as an *Angloise* in the Dresden ms, a bit surprising considering the rhythmic  motif which substitutes for the more typical  of the angloise. The title is quite appropriate, however, since the numerous trills and double mordents call to mind the Tyrolian yodel, accompanied in this case

with an 'alpine bagpipe' in the form of a bass pedal note. The nature of the theme necessitated a more elaborate first section than that usually found in this type of composition.

### *Sonata no 22 in F major " Le Fameux Corsaire " (The celebrated Pirate) (WeissSW 28)*

Of the more than ninety first sonatas known to have been composed by Weiss, only *The Infidel* and no 22 were given poetic titles. As suggested by Douglas Alton Smith, the pirate in question was, in all probability, Blackbeard (Edward Teach), whose life and spectacular death in 1718 were subject to intense journalistic coverage during the lifetime of Weiss. Another candidate would have been René Duguay-Trouin, a privateer of the same period who excelled in swashbuckling bravado of the same sort.

Noblesse and ease are the sentiments used to describe F major, clearly one of Weiss's favourite keys. These descriptors apply equally to the previous sonatas nos 1 and 14. *Le Fameux Corsaire* exists in completed form in two manuscripts, the London ms and the Dresden ms. Both versions have certain melodic or rhythmic improvements, with the widest discrepancies occurring in the bourree and minuet, pieces which can also be found in the Vienna ms, written in the composer's hand. The presto is known as an *Allegro* in the Moscow manuscript.

The *Allemande* poses a curious problem in that the notes of the second and third bars are notated in Dresden at double the speed of their London ms equivalents. Relying on the musical evidence, this would seem to be the result of compositional fine-tuning and not simply a copying error since the measures in question have a much better flow than in the London version. The initial version could have seemed slow and unbalanced with respect to larger rhythmic considerations. This is by no means an isolated example of a Weissian touch-up. There are examples of passages being re-worked in the same manuscript, as in the minuet of this sonata where the London manuscript shows two adjustments in Weiss's handwriting. Equally, one notes slight changes from one manuscript to another. One possible explanation for the differences between the measures in question is that at the time of writing the London version Weiss would have been performing in 'notes inégales' with its attendant slowing down effect while, conversely, the Dresden version could have been produced during a period when his performance of the work relied on the inevitably faster technique of 'notes égales'. This supposition can be made only in the light of performance practice.

The allemande is a veritable elegy, extremely contemplative by design, delighting the ear with the grace of its serene majesty. Contrary to custom, the repeats could not be observed in my performances. This is based on the perception that the work serves as a calm prelude to the sonata, preparing the listener for the energetic brilliance of the subsequent courante. Indeed there is no overture preceding the allemande. The first section seems abnormally short and, moreover, the whole piece is made of through-composed melodic lines. These three factors tend to obviate the need for literal repetition.

The *Courante* seems to relate the epic of the famous pirate through long undulating phrases, possibly intended to suggest the movement of ocean waves. There are some clever hemiolas in addition to cadential sections which are heard with octave doublings, a colouristic device that would become a pianistic cliché in the latter part of the 18th century. The *Bouree* is also characterised by melodic wave motion, sometimes initiated by the bass voice. Again, in keeping with a certain propensity to seek thematic associations, it is worth noting that the aforementioned bass melody can be found in the C minor fugue of the first book of the Well-Tempered Clavier by Bach. The order of composition would have been Weiss:1720(?), Bach:1722.

A dark shadow permeates the discourse with the arrival of the *Sarabande*, presented in the relative minor. Delightful triplet figures contribute a languorous (Mattheson would have said 'pious') allure, mainly due to accurate placement, in alternation with the neighbouring  rhythmic motif. This is followed by a *Menuet* of the most discrete kind. Further proof, if needed, for the overarching thematic unity of the sonata can be found in the first two bars of the minuet which are identical to the opening of the allemande (notwithstanding a bit of rhythmic camouflage). The Dresden and Vienna manuscripts provide a gift in the form of an addendum with written ornamentation for the four closing bars. An excellent example of grace notes through diminutions is offered in the process, including a harmonic interpolation under the primary melodic line; a precious specimen for an interpreter.

The final *Presto*, titled *Allegro* in the Moscow ms is played more or less as such in my concerts, that is to say, without undue haste. Adorned by long phrases, the movement re-acquaints the listener with an atmosphere of joyful exhilaration. The initial theme could have been adapted from the well-known hornpipe

The hornpipe, by definition a seaman's song, provides an extra level of association with the title of the sonata.



### *Sonata no 23 in A minor " L'infidèle " (The Infidel) (WeissSW 29)*

Considered by non-specialists and members of the guitar/lute fraternity alike to be one of the most appealing of Weiss's creations, *L'infidèle* provided one primary impetus for my conversion to the lute. Eugen M. Dombois, with his profoundly magnificent 1971-72 recording of this sonata, was to convince many guitarists of the stunning expressive capabilities of the Baroque lute, and is responsible for their divorce from the modern guitar.

The colourful title of the work can be best explained by the occasional presence of surprising 'oriental' intervals, most notably at the beginning of the minuet. The parallel between musical treatments that were 'unfaithful' to conventional harmonic rules, and the usage of the same term to describe Muslims who were reluctant to embrace Christianity must be understood in the context of 1683 when the Turkish advance through Europe was arrested at the gates of Vienna. The leader of the successful Christian forces was Johann III, King

of Poland whose successors were to rule Dresden during Weiss's lifetime, since Saxony and Poland were under the same crown. It is interesting to note also that Weiss was in the service of the Polish royal family during his stay in Rome.

A minor was seen to be "a tonality that could produce majestic and serious affect, so much so that it could turn to flattery. By nature it is well-measured, plaintive yet honest and relaxed. It beckons sleep and can be used to stir the soul in various manners. It is, in other words sweet, even mellow". The extraordinary accuracy of this description becomes immediately apparent upon performance of this 23rd sonata. As is the case with the two preceding sonatas, this one also can be found in the Dresden ms, though the *Musette* and *Sarabande* appear in inverse order. Both versions are from the hand of a copyist. Only the minuet can be found in still further sources, the two Warsaw copies, to be precise.

As in *The Celebrated Pirate*, the first movement, the *Entrée*, fulfils the function of overture, though in a dynamic, grandiose fashion, possibly bringing to mind the glory of the previously mentioned King Johann Sobieski. Unlike the *allemande* of Sonata no 22, it becomes clearly evident that in the case of this *Entrée*, the repeats are necessary. The *courante* (*Cour:*) mixes nostalgia with liveliness while offering completely original compositional techniques, the best examples of which can be found in the elaborate cadences at the ends of both sections. It comes as a bit of a surprise to hear the *Love Story* theme 250 years ahead of its time!

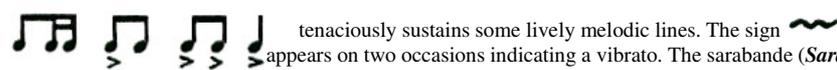
The *Sarabande* seems to symbolise the implacable progress of destiny. The unique musical atmosphere lends itself nicely to the presentation of lute music at a slow tempo. The *Menuet* is also idiosyncratically 'lutish' in its skilful use of *campanellas*, where most of the notes are distributed one per string. The resultant shimmering texture fully exploits the inherent richness of the late Baroque lute. Moreso than in the other movements, the *Musette* seems to speak directly, revealing hidden layers of meaning by times deeply poetic, giving vent to the alternation between tender phrases and those of a more bellicose nature, the latter serving to remind us of the title of the sonata. It is curious to note that the *musette* is the only work in the sonata to make use of the two last courses. It is possible that the sonata was originally composed without the *musette*, for the eleven course instrument, only to be revised at a later date, after Weiss had preceded his contemporaries in adopting the thirteen course lute. One could even surmise that he chose to honour his newly found instrument by composing a piece to celebrate the novelty of the low A! Though the Dresden ms offers a reworking of the other movements with a view to full utilisation of the thirteen course lute, the London version has proven to me to be equally pleasing to perform, the sonic equilibrium being quite correct in all respects. Similarly, the melodic and rhythmic variations found in the Dresden *musette* do not constitute a marked improvement, with the exception of one measure which seems to have fallen victim to a copying error in the London ms. The *Paysane* retains the omnipresent majesty of the sonata, providing in addition, an engaging dance feel; an heroically victorious conclusion to the work.

#### [Sonata no 24 in E flat major \(WeissSW 30\)](#)

This sonata is more inclined toward the character of its tonality as described by Mattheson than is the sixth sonata, *WeissSW 10*, which shares the same key. This work, which has more of a serious, austere aura than the earlier sonata, also exists in the Dresden version with a different prelude and the addition of the *courante* of sonata *WeissSW 10*. In London, the typical unmeasured prelude has been obviously added afterwards since it takes up the space left by the *allemande*'s second page. (See the General context about the preludes). It should be noted that from this point onward, to the end of the manuscript, almost all the pages are in the hand of the same copyist, a person whose work is more frequently encountered throughout the entire London manuscript than that of any of the other five copyists that have been identified. He does make slight alterations in calligraphic style during the course of the last three sonatas. Whether this was done for effect or was simply as a result of the passage of time between copies is a question open to conjecture.

Though the *Prelude* is quite free, it is nevertheless important to make a clear distinction between the quavers and semi-quavers. As is the case elsewhere, it is apparent that Weiss was seeking irregular accents and phrase lengths, ingredients that give an interesting flavour to a work of this type. The composer takes great pleasure in delaying a contrapuntal resolution in one voice whilst simultaneously providing proper cadential closure in another. All of this gives an interesting dislocation of phrase lengths and harmonic rhythm. This subtle textural device confirms yet again the exacting, confident character of the composer. One can also find an example of a case where the harmonic restrictions of the instrument are turned to the advantage of the composer when the contra A natural bass (which is compulsory because it is an open string) is used instead of the expected A flat. The composer wins the gamble since the effect moves from that of an unexpected curiosity to a familiar treatment through frequent usage during the sonata.

The *Allemande* is replete with scattered right hand fingerings and difficult left hand material. It begins on the down beat rather than on the pick-up, which makes it a bit unusual in that it shares this feature with only one other *allemande* in the entire manuscript (the *allemande* of sonata 25). Moments of mystical fervour are encountered in the second part of this piece. The *Rigaudon* affirms a very accented character while the rhythm

 tenaciously sustains some lively melodic lines. The sign  appears on two occasions indicating a vibrato.

The *sarabande* (*Sarab:*), though similar to others in the volume, has a unique musical personality due to certain harmonic progressions. The artistic control necessary for the interpretation of complex sonorities hidden within tablature notation is put to the test during a passage in the second part of the piece. A bass pedal can remain under a trill that occurs on the following beat, the effect of which enriches the musical discourse in a very dramatic fashion. This sonority is unrealisable on anything other than the original instrument. When the same sequence appears in the very next modulating measure however, it becomes quite apparent that the previous technique would be inappropriate since the resultant sound would be unbalanced in this context.

The *Gavotte* contains much of the same confidence of the *rigadon*. Of graceful character, it presents a rhythmic pulsation and a motif of descending basses which is similar to that of the *rigadon* of the twenty-first sonata in C minor (and not similar to the *gavotte* of this same sonata no 21). As a result, their titles are actually interchangeable. The elegant *Menuet*, which is stately but somewhat precious, is evocative of the movements of court dancers. The performance difficulty of this movement lies in the search for a clean but not rigid playing style. As elsewhere, the guiding principle behind each phrase should be in the emulation of natural singing.

The heading *Le Sans Soucie* seems to refer to the Sans Souci palace near Berlin, but this was constructed at least twenty years after the composition. The reference would exist only if the title was to be added later. Nevertheless, Weiss visited for sure in 1728 the king Frederick II of Prussia, a man who valued French culture as much as music, who invited prominent intellectuals like Voltaire to visit him in the aforementioned palace. Noted for his word play and clever wit Frederick wrote an enigmatic message to Voltaire:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{—P—} & & \text{—si—} \\ \text{venez} & \text{à} & \text{100} \end{array}$$

(meaning: Venez souper à Sans Souci.)

To this Voltaire responded : G a (J'ai grand appétit.)

Weiss seems to be anticipating through this delightful work something of the happiness that will infuse his spirit during his visit to Frederick II, himself a flautist, and his sister Wilhelmine, a lutenist and admirer of Weiss. The piece is subtitled *Allegro assai*, but is written in quavers rather than semi-quavers, a notational strategy designed possibly to inhibit an excessively fast performance. One can easily imagine a band of merry-makers in a coach headed for Sans Souci. This also brings to mind the theme and jumping rhythms of the caprice written by J. S. Bach “on the occasion of his brother’s departure”, with its ‘song of the post carriage driver’. This allegro follows the rhythmic model of the paysanne of the preceding sonata. While calling up images of the German countryside and Princess Wilhelmine, the work invites us to consider the irony inherent in the knowledge that Bayreuth, where the princess patronised lutenists successors of Weiss of the stature of Falckenhagen, would at one time celebrate the virtues of the most intimate of instruments, the lute, and, a few decades later, be home to the Wagnerian most excessive of romantic works. It would seem logical to appreciate the complementarity of these opposed musical tendencies, while noting that the composers of music for large resources were also sensitive to the aesthetic demands of more subtle instruments. (Wagner opined that the orchestra was a large guitar; Berlioz composed his operas on the guitar; Bach and Monteverdi used the lute or theorbo in major orchestral works).

### Sonata no. 25 in F major (WeissSW 31)

This sonata does not exist in other manuscripts. Variants of the allemande and gigue can be found, nevertheless, in the two first sonatas of the Dresden manuscript. The gigue of the Dresden ms contains a surprising mixture of identical measures and measures that differ in the first part, the second part being quite different after eight bars. In disagreement with D.A. Smith, I feel that this sonata is quite unified and that the bourree placed after the gigue is not really a Bourree II, rather an isolated work. This is due to lack of continuity with the preceding bourree. The dissimilarity is heightened by the difference in speed and by the inability to logically connect the bourrees in a I-II-I structural alignment.

Again, the spirit of F major suits this sonata very well. The *Allemande* is highly reminiscent of the other F major allemandes found in the volume, the only possible exception being the one contained in *The Celebrated Pirate*. This invites speculation as to whether Weiss may have simply written extensively in the idiomatic key of F major before distributing the works among the sonatas of the London manuscript. This tonality is to be found at the beginning, middle, and end of the collection in works that are very similar, betraying a close proximity in their dates of composition. The *Allegro*, which replaces the courante, seems to indicate the possibility that it is in reality a duo, yet it maintains full integrity as a solo work. In this respect, it is similar to the courante of the fourth solo sonata *WeissSW 5* in G major. This work does not seem to have been placed gratuitously as a second movement, appearing after the allemande with a duration that does not suggest a concluding movement. It seems to have been deliberately disposed in the manner of a work for lute and flute. This Allegro features a lively discourse between major and minor modes, which will become a typically Mozartean way of proceeding. One also finds at this point two measures that are identical to the middle theme of the allemande of the third ‘cello suite by J. S. Bach.

The *Bourée* is as playful as many of the others and it follows quite logically the Allegro by virtue of similar thematic structures. This unity within the sonata is maintained through to the gigue. As is often the case with Weiss (see for example the bourree of the sixth solo sonata) this bourree would appear at first glance to be somewhat mediocre, lacking imagination. There are even those who believe the piece to be the work of another author. Usually this opinion is hastily formed through an initial sight-reading session. After repeated performance at the proper tempo the bourree comes alive with a simple though rich and balanced texture. It must be stated that the forward motion of Weiss’s phrases, to say nothing of accent distribution and harmonic subtleties will remain obscure to those who have not attained a certain technical virtuosity. At a certain point one becomes aware of an essential distinguishing characteristic between the music of Bach (surely a reference point for all discussions on Western art music) and that of Weiss. Whereas the music of Bach remains inherently logical regardless of tempo, one must intuitively grasp the musical pulse of a piece by Weiss. This is also true in the case of Vivaldi, although in his case it was easier to discern about five decades ago. This accessibility of understanding could explain in part the general preference for the music of Bach. Musicologists should develop on this comparative study since Weiss must be understood not only from the perspective of his instrumental writing, but also from the standpoint of his compositional method.

To return to the bourree in question, misunderstandings occur even in what could appear to be errors of notation. (This is typical of certain contemporary editors of guitar music.) Once again, a proper performance at the correct tempo with proper accentuation and intonation reveals the bourree to be completely balanced and error-free. Resplendent with beautiful rising arabesques, the bourree is also characterised by interplay of accented tones erupting in three successive voices, surely a Weissian subtlety of the highest order:



A staccato technique becomes even more important here than in the case of the Allegro, with certain notes requiring an extremely detached technique. This piece also suggests the possibility of repeated sections entirely in the style of the *doubles*. The two minuets are also of more interesting character than what would appear to be the case on first encounter. The notion of thematic unity in the sonata is reinforced through the use of motifs that are found in the bourree, though a sarabande is conspicuous by its absence. The *Menuet 2do* (secundo), presented in the relative minor, seems to be a replacement for the sarabande, having as it does, almost twice as many measures

as the first *Menuet*. This points to another possible difference between the music of Bach and Weiss. In the developments of the second section the Weissian approach seems to have as much melancholy but less Lutheran austerity than is the case with Bach. Astonishing modulations follow one another, within phrases that meander mysteriously, breaking off in full development. There is nevertheless a very real sense that the musical gestures are cohesive, strong in both the poetic and structural senses of the word. The *Gigue* is in ternary metre, giving a sprightly motoric rhythm with beautiful singing bass lines occurring in a hopping rhythm.

### *Sonata no. 26 in F major (WeissSW 32)*

This is the last solo sonata, found in the very last pages of the London Manuscript. Nine individual works can be found between Sonatas 25 and 26 (Please refer to the table of titles in the General Context) some of which show considerable maturity. Sonata no 26, which exemplifies the tonality of F major to the same extent as did the preceding sonata, is also contained in its entirety in both the Dresden and Wroclaw manuscripts. The gigue exists in the Podebrady ms though the Dresden copy has a different gigue. In London the second minuet is not present in the sonata but squeezed between sonatas 18 and 19, 70 pages away. Why is that for? It might have been composed separately and added later. This relationship seems to have been forgotten in the critical commentary of the Peters edition, and our first impression is to believe that this menuet is not in London. In the Wroclaw version, this sonata has the title *Parthia a Liuto Solo Sign. Silvio Leopold Weifs 1739* (to the best of our ability to decipher it given the poor condition of the microfilm and/or manuscript). It is possible that the year in question could be 1729 or 1719. Different versions of the same piece provide an opportunity not only to analyse a variety of fingering possibilities but also to choose between different approaches. This fascinating variety of sources offers an interesting basis for comparison despite the occurrence of errors in these complementary texts.

The *Allemande* follows the model of its equivalent piece in the first sonata. In fact the same could be said of both sonatas in their entirety. We find the same compositional style and tonality at the end of the London Manuscript (Sonata no 26) as we did at the beginning (Sonata no 1) and middle (Sonata no 14). This is further proof that the composer was thinking in terms of a homogeneous whole, representative of his first period, even if certain works already show the finesse found in the later large sonatas (the last 14 of the 20 Dresden Manuscript originals). The deliberate homogeneity is such that the first measure of the last sonata is exactly the same as that of the allemande from sonata no 1 ! Because the Dresden and Wroclaw copies do not have this identical departure, I feel it wise to borrow the beginning as found in these manuscripts to better differentiate this allemande, which is, admittedly, quite different afterward. There is nevertheless more than a passing familial resemblance between the allemandes of sonatas nos. 1, 14, 25 and 26. This could also be said of the courante (*Cour:* ), which has the same style, rhythm, harmonic progression and voice play as that of the first sonata. This courante has a unique lightness that carries us with verve through an uplifting sequential organisation, the like of which can be found possibly only in the courante of the eighth sonata *WeissSW 12*. The listener is treated to a triumphant theme with majestic bass leaps, in addition to another theme in the first part that reminds us of the Gloria in Excelcis Deo melody in *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.

The *Bourree*, as well-constructed as all the other Weiss bourrées, is surprising in that the first theme bears a strong resemblance to that of the presto in *The Celebrated Pirate*. More bass tones, or rather, the repetition of bass tones, are to be found in the Wroclaw version. This invites speculation as to whether the owner may have been using old or less resonant strings on his lute. There are, however, almost no slur indications in the Wroclaw version. The *Sarabande* is extremely intense, with long breathing phrases, delicately linked one to the other. As with the other movements in the sonata, the sarabande was more carefully edited in the London manuscript, showing very sophisticated fingering and slurring indications. This is quite clear even from the beginning of the piece.

As with the Sarabande, the Wroclaw first *Menuet* appears to have been quickly edited, with many inconvenient fingerings. The work offers an example of interpretation through alternation between 'notes egales and notes inegales', with all decisions being based on the quest for natural phrase expression. The second *Menuet* (*WeissSW 16\**) (from p.242) is full of elegant gracefulness and adequately reinforces the first minuet. Curiously enough, the Wroclaw version is clearly superior to the Dresden. These discrepancies between manuscripts provide further impetus for carefully researching all sources when embarking upon a project of this kind. As a general rule, the Dresden appears to be more meticulously edited than all other sources, with the exception of the London ms, of course. The unity of the sonata is maintained in the second minuet through the use of motifs built on thirds, motifs that are present in the bourree. In any case, the left hand configurations and the modulations in the second part provide ample evidence, in our view, that this minuet was composed by Weiss. It comes as a delight to hear the ubiquitously Baroque descending fourth bass progression (think of the Pachelbel canon) at the beginning of the piece.

The *Gigue* confirms our opinion that there was an intentional desire to solidly conclude the London Manuscript in a style similar to the beginning. The giges of sonatas *WeissSW 1* and *WeissSW 32* have in common the same number of bars, plus the same octave progressions at the ends of sections. The work was either written at the same time as the first sonata or reworked at a later date to provide the essential homogeneity between the two, the mordents being a possible indication of the latter scenario. In effect, mordents are indicated more frequently in later works. Regarding the slurs, some can be borrowed profitably from the Podebrady ms. However, as is usually the case, many inexact renderings (missing bass notes, copying errors, etc.) are to be found in all of the versions other than the London and Dresden manuscripts.

### 35 individual pieces

Even though they are not indicated as such, the two minuets in F (*Menuet* (p.11 (13) (*WeissSW 1.8*) and *Men:* p.12 (14) (*WeissSW 1.9*) can be joined quite logically as Minuet I and Minuet II, which lead quite naturally to the *Da capo* of the first one. This would appear to be the reason why they were placed together. They are considered by Smith and Crawford as movements that could belong to the neighbouring first sonata, albeit as substitute movements for the minuet found therein. The second one appears as the only minuet of the same sonata found in three copies of the Warsaw Manuscript. Markus Lutz points out that the first fifteen bars of the Minuet I are the same as those found in the minuet, in B flat, of the duo sonata *WeissSW 14* in g minor (both of which exist only in the London Manuscript). Everything changes after these initial fifteen measures. There was indeed an adaptation, but was it from the departure point of a solo or duo work? I would hazard that we have here a non-stop discourse typical of a solo work, but one that reveals also a supplementary proof of the solo/ensemble flexibility often encountered within the work of Weiss. This modular approach to musical function can be seen in even the earliest of Baroque lutenists. Consider, for example, Ennemond Gautier and his pieces like the allemande entitled *Testament de Mézangeau* which is also, by the composer's own admission, to be found as a gigue, arrived at through a simple rhythmic re-organisation. The three Warsaw versions of the second minuet are for a lute with thirteen courses, while the London equivalent, written in the composer's hand, is for an eleven-course lute. If it is worthwhile borrowing certain basses from the thirteen-course version, certain cadences are more minutely tooled in the eleven-course example. A sign, which seems to be a gruppetto, appears just before the ending of this second movement. The gruppetto can be easily

confirmed as being the correct interpretation due to the ease with which it falls under the fingers. I find it pertinent to note that the demands of the tablature notation would lead us to suppose that Weiss had thin, elongated fingers.

The *Gavotte* (p.13(11)) (*WeissSW 1.10*) in F, another possible movement for the first sonata, could give the impression that it is a duo, but I have my doubts. The repetition of a seemingly unique motive does not necessarily indicate any melodic lacuna, or the necessity of another voice, as witness the numerous Scarlatti sonatas thusly constructed; sonatas that do not require extra material. In fact, this piece solicits a certain attachment due to its inherent simplicity, as do the pieces composed by Bach for Anna Magdalena. As was the case in the second minuet, the repeat points and the letter *R* are quite clearly presented during the three last measures of the end of the piece, measures that are incidentally, redolent with charm. This gavotte presents us with a typically Weissian challenge for the left hand. It seems by times to be a legato study that involves a systematic anticipatory movement of the left elbow. This piece does not appear in any other manuscript.

The *Gavotte and Double* (p.22) (*WeissSW 2.8/2.9*) in D major (no other source, and there is actually no title here) belongs, theoretically speaking, to the second sonata but its appearance after the gigue gives the impression of an isolated work or possibly a substitute for the bourree. Its rustic allure is not unpleasant and seems to act as an antidote – I'm sure it was the composer's intention - to numerous more serious pieces in this book. As with the preceding gavotte, I find no evidence of weakness of writing, nor do I discern a hidden duo. Since no title appears in the manuscript, I feel that we may as well name it an angloise, given the predominant ascending line.

Of the following four pieces in B flat, two are movements of the incomplete *WeissSW 4* sonata, this sonata being complete in the Dresden manuscript. The missing movements in London are the minuet and the gavotte, and Dresden bears a different prelude. Another discrepancy is that the Dresden bourree is a sufficiently expanded variant of the London one to make it an independent piece. This leaves us with only two common pieces: the overture and the courante. Since there are in London four pieces in C and four pieces in D (towards the end of the manuscript) that seem also to be incomplete sonatas, one could wonder why these groupings are not considered as well sonatas in their own right. Nevertheless, D.A.Smith chose not to call sonata the pieces in C and those in D but he did for these problematic pieces in B flat, probably to establish a concordance with Dresden. With only two real concordant movements, I have chosen personally to identify in my analysis the *WeissSW 4* pieces like the C major and the D major pieces, that is, as individual pieces. I would have also stretched things for my recording by including the two missing pieces whilst omitting, of necessity, one of the two preludes. For a performer, it would seem awkward to record "entirely" a London sonata coming from Dresden and skip it in a recording of Dresden, including only orphaned movements of an actual complete sonata. Influenced by this logical necessity and as my intention was to remain as faithful as possible to the originals, I have decided to refrain from changing the presentation of the London version (See the introduction of *The London Manuscript unveiled*, part I, LSA Quarterly, Volume 32, N°2, may 1997).

The *Prélude* (p.33) (*WeissSW 4.1*) (no other source) proclaims a proud magnificence and an energy that portends greater development in the two following movements. Indeed the *Ouverture* (p.34) (*WeissSW 4.2*) shines with orchestral colours in the style of Haendel or Telemann with the principle theme in the basses that evokes a bassoon timbre. In this typical slow-fast-slow pattern, the *Allegro* is characterised by a lively fugue theme. In the Dresden version, the first part and the allegro both have repeat indications. As mentioned before, we can explain these as being optional in the spirit of an anticipated "encore" rather than in the usual systematic context.

The courante (*Cour*: p.36) (*WeissSW 4.3*) begins in a manner similar to the one of the *Celebrated Pirate*, though the melodic line is inverted. The full maturity of the composer is revealed in this work. The thematic equilibrium is not at all disturbed by the long chain of phrases. Some left-hand fingerings are indicated finely in the tablature. It should be noted that from the prelude onwards, in London, the twelfth and thirteenth courses are not used, which leads to the supposition that the intended instrument was originally the eleven-course model. On the other hand, it is because of the courante and overture, which provide also an excellent pretext for an instrumental colour change, that we have decided to use a standard lute for this recording, and not the elongated theorbo lute. Both pieces have a chromatic bass line playable only on a standard model, which has a wider fingerboard. This instrumentation was then necessary for some works in Volumes 4, 5, 6 and 10 of our recording series. Nevertheless, there are only nine pieces in the London Manuscript that require a standard lute, so I feel I should mention them as follows. Two of them (indicated by an asterisk) could even have their chromatic bass or phrase section taken up the octave without adversely affecting the music. These include : the overture and courante in B flat (*WeissSW 4*), the allemande\* in c minor (*WeissSW 7*), the allemande and gigue in B flat (*WeissSW 15*), the prelude\* in d minor (*WeissSW 20*), the allemande and sarabande in f minor (*WeissSW 21*) and the gigue in G (*WeissSW 22*).

The *Bouree* (p.39) (*WeissSW 4.4*) can also be found, in a simplified version, in the Podebrady manuscript. The spellings are *Bouree* (London), *Bourée* (Dresden) and *Burè* (Podebrady). The Dresden version is very different, with more arpeggios and repeated melodic cells, but I have chosen to resist any inclinations to mix versions in my recording. It does seem that coherence suffers and that it would be better to choose the version that one prefers, adding ornaments where necessary.

The *Allegro* (p.38) (*WeissSW 1\**) in G major (which, along with the following courante is found only in London) is situated in the manuscript between the courante and the bourree in B flat. It seems certain that it was added later and only because the empty page could contain it. We have, as a result, switched the bourree and the allegro in this presentation. One questions whether the allegro might be the work of another composer, though typically Weissian writing and fingering techniques can be found. (Note the melodic dialogues that bring to mind the gavotte of the sonata *WeissSW 27*). A title such as paysanne or gavotte would indeed seem appropriate. On the other hand, the abundant use of the two bottom courses, to the point of sonic confusion, seems to be atypical of Weiss. Could this be the work, as the minuet p.136, of his brother? Another ambiguity surfaces in that I was quite convinced that the piece was a duo, but it has enough active melodic bass usage to make it seem equally plausible as a solo work. Could this be a solo that has been re-worked into a duo, or the inverse? Could it, in the final analysis, be both a solo and duo? It seems possible.

The same doubts surround the *Courante Royale* (p.40) (*WeissSW 2\**), which was transcribed by the same later copyist, but to a much lesser degree since there are few opportunities for the addition of another voice. If it wasn't composed by Weiss, it was composed by a student/disciple who was striving to use all of the idiomatic formulae of the master. In actual fact, the piece re-utilises not only the arpeggios, but also the motifs of the courante of sonata *WeissSW 11*, those of the *Celebrated Pirate*, the allegro of the sonata *WeissSW 22* in addition to a motif of the allegro of sonata *WeissSW 35* (Dresden).

My omission of the d minor bourree of page 78 was precipitated by the fact that it is exactly the same as the one found in the ninth solo sonata. It should be acknowledged, however, that we have here a beautiful example of repetitions that were all written down by the composer. In proceeding to the *Prelude* (p.80) (*WeissSW 10.1*) in E flat, we find another piece that exists in one unique version; a work that belongs to the sixth solo sonata but was not recorded due to a decision to use a substitute prelude (a short work added to the free space on the second page). The reason for this editorial decision is that I preferred to record the more imposing of the two as an individual work, rather

than the other way around. The repeat marks are found yet again at the end of the piece, though we have an example of an improvised work! The idea of optional repeat is quite applicable here also, because of the density of the work. The opening pool of tenderness becomes transformed, little by little into an occasionally furious exaltation of energy. One senses a vagabond spirit that is somehow full of assurance. The prelude can be seen as a musical representation of the encounter between Weiss and his wife as described by Marpurg in his book of savoury anecdotes concerning the social elite of his time. Leopold goes for a walk on a bright Sunday and sees passing in front of him a female beauty that transports him, giving him the eloquence necessary to convince her to accompany him to the park. He then succeeded in meeting her parents, who, in the face of such exuberance consented that very day to the marriage of Weiss and their daughter. The story ends - and the prelude seems to echo this conclusion - with the words "and they lived one of the most beautiful unions the world has known." This prelude brings to mind various moments from those of the ninth (*WeissSW 13*) and twentieth (*WeissSW 26*) solo sonatas.

The [Minuet \(p.92\)](#) (*WeissSW 4\**) in G, another untitled piece unique to the London ms, seems upon first reading to be the continuation of the Royal Courante. It uses the same abundance of thematic unisons and is in the calligraphy of the same copyist. It could be heard initially as a courante but the frequency of bass usage and the accented notes lead to the conclusion that it is most assuredly a minuet. It would be difficult to affirm that this work is not a Weiss piece, although strong suspicions are raised by those numerous heavy basses, not in his style at all. It would not, on the other hand, come as a surprise to learn that it had also existed in a parallel duo format.

The [Fuga \(p.118\)](#) (*WeissSW 6\**) in C major and the [Fuga \(p.130\)](#) (*WeissSW 7\**) in d minor represent two singularly grand moments in the London Manuscript. Each is of perfect fabrication and each has an individual psychological aura. The first conquers through serenity and the second is characterised by a sombre enraged energy. It is this latter fugue which resembles the writing of Bach, with a beginning similar to one of the Cantor fugues. Wenzel Pichel (1741-1804) also wrote a fugue for solo violin using this same theme. These two fugues are not found in any other manuscript although variant of the fugue in d minor can be found in the Buenos Aires ms but it would seem to be of less rigorous compositional technique, even if both display equal aesthetic merit. The fugue in C (which also has repeat marks at the end) has a martial rhythm tainted with harmonic tenderness whereas the d minor fugue wallows in the tension of acidic intervallic juxtapositions. The first fugue, which is more technically challenging because of the left hand leaps, is light and aerial while the second is dense and heavy. This second has one, and only one, right hand fingering indication. The composer asks, in a touching detail, that a note be played very precisely with the middle finger, presumably to get the best colour possible. The fugue in d minor begins in the middle of a page, the top half of which is empty. It must be supposed that Weiss left part of the page blank on purpose, with the intention of adding a prelude at a later date; but this half page remains unfinished for posterity.

[L'Amant Malheureux \(p.132\)](#) (*WeissSW 8\**) (*The Unfortunate Lover*) can also be found in the Paris ms and has inspired other Germanic composers such as Pachelbel with his *L'Amant Malcontent*. This famous composition was not written by Weiss, rather by the important and influential Jacques Gallot, and entitled *Le Vieux Gallot* (Vaudry de Saizenay ms). His dates are unknown but his death would have occurred at or around the time of the birth of Weiss. As another example of the influence of Gallot, his *Psyché*, another magnificent work, reminds the listener of the chaconne in g minor, in addition to certain allemandes, by Weiss. Although there are 13 other existing lute versions of *L'Amant Malheureux* throughout Europe, it is fascinating to have Weiss's own version of this piece with all of its variants and completely ornamented repeats, the performer being relieved of this responsibility for once! This is quite understandable – one would be reluctant to change a single note or inflection found in this ethereal, sacred and mystical song. One can however make good use of the *notes inégales* to enhance the pathos. The elegance of Gallot has been barely modified, but somehow amplified a century after the facts through the skill and respectful intelligence of Weiss. This is a truly magnificent artistic collaboration that transcends the barriers of time. The sonic imagery speaks of tears in the beginning, falling one by one. This is followed by the despair that permeates the spirit, concluding eventually with heavy sighing. Musical intervals were chosen for symbolic force, primary ones being those of the fifth, third and octave. This composition is a true masterpiece of its time, the equal of many better-known 'hit' favourites! The Paris version, in g minor, is correct and meticulous (could it be by a younger Silvius?) but the London copy, in a minor with its written repeats, has a certain extra, if ineffable, ingenuity.

The [Fantasie \(p.134\)](#) (*WeissSW 9\**) in c minor, a unique version bearing the inscription *Weiss 1719 à Prague* at the end, was published in e minor for guitar in the 1960's and recorded by Julian Bream. This recording, with its perfect legato interpretation of the Fantasy, along with Logy's Tombeau and the Passacaille in D, was largely instrumental in inciting many novices toward the works of Weiss. It is true that Segovia had previously played a few Weiss pieces in concert, on the guitar, and one should not dismiss easily his influence, even if he was also capable of passing off Manuel Ponce pastiches as those of Weiss. (This, because he couldn't be troubled to adapt other original works, an attitude consistent with his loathing of the lute.) I remember playing the Fantasy on the guitar, stopping at each measure to imagine how this work might sound on the lute. The first half, which is unmeasured, consists of a continuous flow of brilliantly undulating musical phrases. The second, which is metered, presents a fugue subject which rises quickly to an expansive state before returning suddenly to the melodic discourse of the beginning and concluding in a paroxysm of closing chords.

The [Minuet \(p.136\)](#) (*WeissSW 10\**) in B flat is untitled, though the style is quite clear. It is also found in the Warsaw ms with the words *Junior Weiss*, making it a possible composition by Leopold's younger brother, Sigismund. Its lightness breathes of a certain freshness with a late eighteenth-century feel and lets indeed the listener in doubt as being from silvius. It brings Mozart or Haydn to mind and the technique required is somewhat effortless. Nevertheless, the element of doubt surrounding this piece obliges one to reflect on a perceived kinship with the little minuets of Bach, which were composed in the same era, and the musical balance is quite a 'Senior Weiss' one. The [Plainte \(p.137\)](#) (*WeissSW 15.1*) is also devoid of title at its heading, though the following information can be found in French at the end: '*A plainte by Mr. Weiss on the generosity of the great Nobility at the cape of good hope, whilst awaiting their promised flotilla of gold: composed on January 11, 1719.*' These sentiments can be found in the music, which combines disillusionment with serene meditation in a manner that is philosophical without rancour. Weiss was visiting Vienna with the Saxon court while preparing for the marriage of the inheritors to be held on the twentieth of March. One wonders which of the two courts was held in disdain by Weiss for the failure to provide monetary payment. It is true that the Viennese court had tried to lure him with an incredibly large salary. The plaint is found beside the tenth solo sonata in B flat in which it could replace the sarabande, and is called as a matter of fact a sarabande in the same sonata copied in the Dresden ms that seems to have lost or rejected the London one. Its unique identity is created by long appoggiatura figures at the beginnings of sections. These in turn yield very unusual harmonies since the appoggiaturas remain stronger than their subsequent resolutions. This is but another subtle Weiss's idea...

The [Tombeau \(p.176\)](#) (*WeissSW 11\**) '*on the death of M: Cajetan Baron of Hartig, arrived on the 25 of March 1719. Composed by Silvio Lepold Weiss in Dresden*' (written in French) is, like the following second tombeau, one of the high points of the manuscript. It is subtitled *Adagio assai* and the key of e flat minor, with many lowered bass courses, is fabulously apposite, even if it was found to be bizarre (or at the very least unusual) at the time of composition. It is not surprising that Mattheson doesn't provide this key with an *affekt* description, going so far as to exclude it from his list of tonalities. He says of keys that he doesn't describe that "*their effects are little known*

and must be left to posterity since they are rarely used". But Weiss was not afraid to outstrip posterity. This key does require the usage of very difficult left hand barrings. I have chosen to tune a few commas flat in order to advantageously darken the musical climate, which comes as a bit of a surprise after hearing the preceding plaint. This work, which has no other known source, is an homage to Cajetan Christoph Anton Freyherr von Hartig (1686-1719), the youngest of five brothers. His sudden death is related in a Viennese paper: "Lord at Rückers he died unmarried in Prague at his house by the old castle steps on March 23 at 5:00 in the morning, in the year 1719, of a fall from his horse that occurred the previous day as he was riding home from the Imperial Zoo at Bubenetz. He fell hard on the old castle steps where the wild horse had galloped with him. For several hours until his death he could not speak. He was 33 years of age. He was taken that same evening to Saint Thomas in the cloister of Saint Barbara".

Even more so than in the *Amant Malheureux*, and to the same extent as Bach, Weiss provides us with a musical scenario that is charged with detailed symbolic content. My personal interpretation of this scenario is as follows: the first chords bring to mind the trumpets that announce the solemn event. The next chords, heavy and lethargic, suggest agony and are soon superseded by harmonic progressions that seem to recall the life of the deceased. A rising third figure brings to mind the edifying character that he maintained throughout life while the serene passage that closes the first part reminds us of our mortality and conscious submission to the will of destiny. The beginning of the second section suggests a dying breath and the suspended chords over a long pedal evoke the passage of time which confirms our destiny. The thundering which follows shows a revolt in the face of death and the ultimate combat that prevails until extinction (the *ff* chord). The descending melodic line that follows represents resignation. Strong choppy chords signal the arrival of death and the attendant drama of the loss of a loved one. This is accomplished while giving the impression that the final heart pulsations are being emitted. The suspended chords of the penultimate measure would suggest that where rhythm ceases, so also does life cease to exist. The diminished quality of the chords depicts the disintegration of the body that returns to ashes. Finally, the ascending line at the very end could be taken to represent the soul which rises to heaven.

The voluble *Bourree* (p.178) (WeissSW 12\*) in C major is also untitled and requires technical versatility. It exists also in two copies of the Warsaw manuscript. The following *Menuet* (p.180) (WeissSW 13\*), which is also in C major, can be found as a *Trio* of another minuet of the Warsaw ms. Harmonically thin, it seems deliberately simplified, as though Weiss were writing for his son or a beginner. The structure strongly suggests a duo or other ensemble work, without necessarily excluding any of the charm of a solo piece. Once again, the easily recognisable *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* theme can be found close to the beginning of the piece. The work contains a fully ornamented repetition of the first section at the bottom of the page.

The *Gavotte* (p.199) (WeissSW 14\*) and the Minuet (*Men.*) (p.199) (WeissSW 15\*) in d minor are found beside a sonata in the same tonality, though they clearly do not belong to it, not least because this sonata is one of the two hidden duo-sonatas of the manuscript. The gavotte exists, with supplementary ornamentations, in three different copies in the Warsaw manuscript, and the minuet is also in the Rohrau Ms. Here, the Da Capo reprise is clearly indicated. On the other hand, the *Petite reprise* of the minuet (no other source) was added by myself. The gavotte is rhythmically dynamic and the minuet seems innocuous at first glance, though more character is revealed through deeper acquaintance with the piece. Harmonically speaking, it has a certain kinship with the bourree of the ninth WeissSW 13 solo sonata.

There is now an almost 100 pages jump in the manuscript, with no description of the minuet in F of p.242 which has been previously integrated to the sonata no.26 WeissSW 32. The Prelude and Fugue in E flat is only identified by the term *Praelude* (p.290) (WeissSW 17\*) (no other source). We note nevertheless an *allegro* indication at the beginning of the fugue. In the heading appear also the words *Del Sig.re Silvio Leopold Weis* with a double-underlined *Parte 10*. This strange nomenclature is currently discussed by the analysts. (See the General Context).

The beginning of the prelude is imbued with an austere majesty that accurately portrays the character of E flat major. All of a sudden, the discourse becomes rudely interrupted by a series of enigmatic chords, over which has been indicated *adagio* and *einen jeden ein mahl Staccato* or, 'each chord once, staccato'. An alternative reading, as put forth by Ruggero Chiesa, would be *F toccato*, as in 'play loudly'. Since *Staccato* exists in other sources, and is a synonym that has been corroborated by writings of persons like Leopold Mozart, I would lean favourably toward the first meaning. These hammered chords cede to a descending line marked *presto*, which in turn is followed by arpeggiated arabesques leading to heavy chromatic descending lines (never encountered previously in the work of Weiss!) that convey an intense feeling of anxiety. This strangeness becomes gradually subsumed in the continuous flow of arpeggios that prepare the serene aerial beginning of the fugue. This light theme is constantly taken up in the bass, which, in the context of this three (occasionally four) voice texture makes it increasingly weighty and pompous. There is a certain flavouring to this fugue, possibly caused by the repeated perfect authentic cadences in the same tonality, that brings Monteverdi to mind. An *Adagio* section terminates the work, in the manner of an overture.

The *Minuet* (WeissSW 18\*) (title missing) and *Trio* (p.292) (WeissSW 19\*) in G (no other source) represents a special case in the London Manuscript. There is a unanimous body of opinion that claims the work either to be a composition by someone other than Weiss, or, as a best possible alternative, a duo from which the second part is missing. I admit that during my initial readings, I also found the piece to be the work of a less able hand, of limited technical prowess. Once 'in the fingers' however, one realises that the delightful ritornello is anything but monotonous and that what seems to be of simple or incomplete construction is in fact a refined, learned discourse. It would have been an error had the composer included incomplete phrases that would necessitate further development. Weiss has proven time and again that even the tiniest of his pieces are of perfect manufacture. Both pieces have a Da Capo, and the Trio is, in this instance, in g minor. The offbeat theme of the minuet seems to be distantly related to the mediaeval *hoquet*, reminding us also of the simplicity of the *Loure* found in Bach's partita for lute or violin BWV1006a. A noteworthy moment in my recording occurs at the end of the first section where a cadential overlap on the last measure gives the impression of shortening it by one beat. The *Bourée* (p.299) (WeissSW 31.7) in F (entitled Bourrée II by Smith and Crawford) is characterised by a steady alternation between singing lines and undulating arpeggio passages. Having performed the piece, I now believe that it is of Weiss's construction. I also feel that it is not related to the bourree in the neighbouring sonata in F, if for no other reason than the presence of diametrically opposed tempi in the works in question. This bourree could never attain the same speed as that of sonata WeissSW 31 due to the technical demands placed on the performer, to say nothing of a certain ridiculousness that would be the result of an attempt to play this bourree at the faster tempo. Conversely, the other bourree would fall apart at the tempo of this one, which has neither the theme nor the modulations of a second bourree. If more convincing is required, one has only to compare these works with bourrees, gavottes, and minuets of the *Divertimento à solo/sonata* no 17, WeissSW 23, which are truly complementary. This supports also an idea which I have been developing whilst systematically performing Weiss, which suggests that in his compositional universe, it makes sense to sub-categorise pieces of the same type according to tempo and sonic thickness.

The [Tombeau \(p.300\)](#) (*WeissSW 20\**) on the death of Mur (Monseigneur) Count of Logy arrived 1721. Composed by Silvio Leopold Weifs (written in French) is one of the pearls of the manuscript (no other source). It is in b flat minor and is sub-titled *Adagio*. It was inspired by the Prague Count Jan Antonin Losy (1650–1721), himself an excellent lutenist and composer who was to influence Weiss. Losy was one of the important links in the French lute tradition, which was transmitted to Eastern European composers, Weiss being the supreme example. A supreme example, but by no means the end point in the tradition, since this musical lineage would last up to Scheidler, who lived in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Speaking of the next generations of lutenists, if one looks at the engraving known to be Falckenhagen, with lute in hands, it would appear that his fingers are possibly poised to play the first chord of this particular tombeau by Weiss. This is one of the masterpieces of this artistic genre, regardless of instrumental medium. As with the preceding tombeau (for Baron d'Hartig) this unusual key casts a sombre colour that exaggerates a certain sadness. Slurred phrasings fall onto strong beats, giving an agonising allure to the work, especially in the last section. All of the work devolves to a breathlessly expired ending where melodic lines weaken, deteriorating into dense chords that must be arpeggiated in clusters. At this point the piece, though extremely well thought-out, with each note occupying a precise place in a larger musical constellation, assumes an improvisatory aspect, with audaciously pleasant surprises. The richness found herein is truly unique, and could not have been created by anyone other than S.L.Weiss. Luise Gottsched, speaking in 1760, proclaimed this piece to be of incomparable beauty, even when compared with the other Weissian masterpieces. As was the case with the Tombeau d'Hartig one could, while listening to this piece, imagine a scenario that recounted the life of a person according to the character of the different musical phrases. While acknowledging the influence of Julian Bream, my decision was to avoid doing the repeats. I can also affirm that the defining moment in my lifelong passion for guitar and lute, indeed the primary motivation for my recordings, came through an audition of that magical recording of Julian Bream playing the Tombeau de Logy on a modern guitar in 1965.

The [Prelud. de Weifs \(p.302\)](#) (*WeissSW 21\**) in C (no other source) is in my recording followed directly by the [Fantasie \(p.305\)](#) (*WeissSW 24\**), in C (no other source) which is a logical linking, the fantasy being a large improvisational fresco on the theme of the prelude. In the manuscript, the fantasy is found three pages further on, after the minuet and gavotte, in the same key. We find this prelude to be a lustrous demonstration of the nobility of the theme, a theme that appears as an ineffably pure incantation. In the middle can be found an harmonic progression that recalls the allemande of the third solo sonata in g minor, another moment that is bursting with pathos. The fantasia is, for all practical purposes, a fireworks display, with continuous successions of rising phrases evoking a deliriously passionate musical climate. The highest pitch available on the lute is attained in this fantasy, and I am fairly certain that it is the only time it is called for in the London Manuscript. I agree with most interpretations of the calligraphically blurred notes found in this tablature, as expressed by D.A. Smith in the Peters complete edition.

The [Menuet \(p.303\)](#) (*WeissSW 22\**) in C (no other source), in two voices instead of three, seems to me to be somewhat of an academic exercise – possibly a study, destined maybe for a student? The musical discourse is subtle nevertheless, never descending to the banal, using a delicate working-through of phrases and an excellent breath control between them. It is necessary to add a surplus of ornamentation to this piece, almost like making a reconstruction of the phrases to adequately re-invigorate the musical discourse. The surprise modulation in the middle of the second part, a luminously expressive moment, serves as a reminder of the composer's modernist tendencies. The [Gavotte \(p.304\)](#) (*WeissSW 23\**) in C (no other source) is joyously dance-like. This lightness of spirit seems somewhat at odds with the inscription in French at the end that reads: *Composed in fear at Töplitz, July 12, 1724*. (It is also possible that these words are related to the Fantasy, because a line fragment can be found under the gavotte). It is entirely possible that this expression, which is a germanicism typical of a German writing in French was intended to mean 'in the fear of God', according to Pierre Pénišon, a specialist in 18th century German, in the sense that one commends their spirit to God. Töplitz, which is today known as Teplice, is situated in the Czech Republic, halfway between Prague and Dresden.

After these four pieces in C major, the last four solo pieces are in D major (b minor for the second minuet). As mentioned above, these groupings raise the question as whether they should be considered as sonatas, even partial ones. The fugally themed [Capriccio \(p.306\)](#) (*WeissSW 25\**) breathes joy and assurance, an assurance of the kind that beams from the countenance of Weiss as portrayed by Denner. This thematically modulating motif is constantly alternating with graciously arpeggiated sections in an unfurling of triumphant good humour. This type of mood deviates from the more serious side of Weiss, which is usually predominant even in his vigorous bourrees or rapid prestos. The London version is short, although curiously terminating in a long and grandiose cadence. Upon examining the two other sources of the work, contained in the Warsaw manuscript (which are essentially similar), we find that they are not really a variant, but rather an essential complement. The initial part of the Warsaw version is the same as almost all of the London version (except the cadence), while the second half helps enormously to reveal the correct grandeur of its thematic lines, as one can appreciate while playing the work. Indeed, one finds that it is quite possible to join this second half to the London version, slightly before its final cadence. If the splice to the London manuscript is made at the right point (a few notes after it has been left – notes that are included in the Warsaw addition anyway) we will have all of the thematic elements of the London manuscript with the added bonus of a second development. This second development justifies the cadence, which is much too long in the London version. On the other hand, the end of the Warsaw version seems hastily conceived, using two incongruous chords. Things become clearer when it is understood that the London and Warsaw versions were not variants of the same piece, but were intended rather to complete each other, which explains why the author felt no necessity to offer any kind of a cadence in the Warsaw manuscript. I would be willing to wager that Weiss, for evident reasons of equilibrium, elongated his *Capriccio* in the second source, with a view to joining it with the London version in his performances.

The second development in the Warsaw version begins when entering the key of F sharp minor. The best transition for London would then be at measure 44. Nothing needs to be changed in the music except maybe by adding two accompanying basses under the top line, in order to help smooth the modulation. I would even call those optional. If at the penultimate measure of Warsaw we come back to London at the third beat of measure 47 (which now becomes measure 75), everything fits perfectly and the grand cadence is naturally justified. Interestingly enough, measures 44-45-46 and the first half of 47 are not lost since they appear also in the Warsaw development. This seems to confirm, in my opinion, the intention of the composer to complete his work with meticulous attention. (See the reconstructed work in the LSA Quarterly, Vol.38 no 4, November 2003)

Filled with maturity, the large [Menuet \(p.308\)](#) (*WeissSW 26\**) and [Menuet 2 \(p.309\)](#) (*WeissSW 27\**) (no other source), with their typically erratic themes, are part of a broader group of heavier minuets that, according to principles discussed previously with respect to the bourree, stand in opposition to the group of lighter sprightly minuets. This constant returning to three-voice texture at the conclusion of every cantabile line leads to a sonic thickening that reinforces a certain philosophical character in the work. Due to technical difficulties, it is not easy for the interpreter to allow the phrases to sing. It is not easy, but it is nevertheless very necessary because the work of Weiss is of a continuously singing quality. The Minuet 2 is harmonically reminiscent of the Rondeau of the solo sonata no 20 *WeissSW 26* in the London ms, which is in the same key. The second part of this piece explores some interesting modulations and syncopated rhythms in the bass tones.

As is the case with Mozart, Weiss exchanges systematically the same phrases in major and minor. The Da Capo without repeats is made very clear by the inscription ‘*Il primo Minuetto si replica, ma senza ripetizione*’.

The dynamic *Mademoiselle Tiroloise* (p.310) (WeissSW 28\*), a paysanne which can also be found titled as such in two copies within the Warsaw manuscript, displays the same writing style and technical features that can be seen in the paysanne of the solo sonata no 12, WeissSW 17 and in the piece *Comment savez-vous ?* of the solo sonata no 20, WeissSW 26. Some measures are better in the London ms, while others are more convincing in the Warsaw version. I have integrated, through the use of repeated sections, the Warsaw variants on my recording, which give an adequate effect of ornamentation.

### 5 ensemble works (duos)

All the ensemble works of the London Ms are from unique source, with the exception of the first *Concert*, also found in the Dresden ms. Three different copyist handwritings, aside from the hand of Weiss himself, have been identified. More than mere accompaniment, the lute parts provide at least two complete voices in a trio sonata context, sometimes even more, to the point of sounding almost like solo works. This ensemble music would be equally beautiful with the addition of harpsichord and viola da gamba, which would give the works a whole new dimension, as well as added ampleness. However, the important aspects to consider in my view were the intimacy of the musical dialogue, the full, rich sonority of the lute, as well as Weiss’s writing style, which puts lute and flute in close relation. I deliberately chose to record the concertos without the ‘cello or viola da gamba and I was also counting on the capability of the lute to project a consistent, stable bass line. The fluid sonority of the flute works well in combination with the plucked strings and the well-separated basses of the lute, to give an amply sonorous musical envelope. Except for the first movement of Duo 4, the dimensions and developments of the musical themes are substantial to the point where it was deemed necessary to take all of the repeats.

In notable duets with flute, Weiss first played with Pierre Gabriel Buffardin (1690-1768), appointed to the Dresden court in 1715. Buffardin served as professor of the brother of J. S. Bach, Johann Jakob “il fratello diletissimo” and later of Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773). Already at age 16, Quantz was proficient at violin, oboe, trumpet, cornet, trombone, horn, flute, bassoon, cello, viola da gamba and double bass, not to mention his studies in harpsichord and composition. Quantz has left us with hundreds of pieces, including numerous flute concerti. He also transcribed the courante of the sonata WeissSW 11 by Weiss for solo flute. It is in Dresden, while working as third oboist in the orchestra, that he first studied the flute with Buffardin and was named first flute of the orchestra after only a few months. Subsequently, he and Weiss were regularly sent to royal functions as star soloists, such as in Prague to play in Fux’s opera *Costanza e forza* presented on the occasion of the crowning of Charles VI in the year 1723.

For today’s Baroque flautist, it may be surprising to see that all the works with flute in the London Manuscript are in flatted keys, which are comfortable on the lute but seemingly strange for the Baroque traverso, given the husky, veiled tone obtained on certain notes due to ‘fork fingerings’ – which do not hinder a rich and convincing sonority. It must be said however that Quantz, who performed regularly with Weiss, possessed a flute with an extra key (see his *Méthode*, 1752). Quantz, unsatisfied by the flutes at his disposition (flutes with one key), added a second key in 1726 in order to correct the pitch of the semitones. He wished to use the differential minor/major semitone technique, which he found to be impossible on the conventional flute. According to this theory, the minor second is calculated unequally : for example, c sharp raises c by 4 commas, and d flat lowers d by 4 commas, which leaves a difference of one comma between c sharp and d flat, a whole tone being made up of 9 commas. In his method, Quantz states : “*Until then the flute had but one key; but when I learned to know the nature of this instrument, I found that there was still always a small imperfection in the pureness of certain tones, that could not be remedied without the adding of a second key, which I added in the year 1726*”.

The *Concert d’un Luth et d’une Flute traversiere. Del Sig.re Weis (WeissSW 6) in B flat* is the first of three *Concerts* in the manuscript. It is also the fourth ensemble work of the eight found in the last fascicle of the Dresden ms entitled *Weissische Partien*. In the Dresden ms it is clearly a duo for two lutes, because the tablature carries the indication *Leuto 1.mo* (primo). It is fortunate that this version exists because half of the last movement – in fact all of the last page – is missing in the London ms. Tim Crawford hazards a guess that Weiss didn’t have his chamber music with him when he went to Prague to re-copy the pages lost by the proprietor of the manuscript. As is the case with the second lute part in the Dresden manuscript, the flute part has been lost and had to be re-composed for all the duos (See the General Context).

The four movements have been given Italian titles of the ‘style concertante’ variety, namely, Adagio, Allegro, Grave, and Allegro. Three of them have the musical character befitting their tonality, as proclaimed by Mattheson. The b flat movements do, in fact, express a mood that is ‘divertingly sumptuous, though discreet’ but the Grave in g minor is not at all ‘moderate and peaceful’, but rather sombre and tormented. One gets the impression that the composer was as much at ease in this music as he was in his solo offerings. There is a marvelous suppleness of thematic development, especially noticeable in the instrumental exchanges. The tranquil majesty of the *Adagio* yields without pause to the largest movement, the first *Allegro*, which requires considerable agility. The resolutely sad, meditative *Grave* has more of a Classic than Baroque allure to it. One is tempted to describe it as melancholic ‘style galant’. The final *Allegro* is freshly exuberant, displaying fully the characteristics of the ‘style concertante’.

The *Concert d’un Luth avec une Flute traversiere. Del Sigismundo Weis. (WeissSW 8) in B flat*, exists along with another of Sigismund’s ensemble works, this one being in the Dresden ms, and it is clear that in both, as in his works without lute, his qualities as a composer are impressive. One can sense a steady hand as well as a proven musical discourse that stands up well next to the ensemble pieces of brother Silvius. Both Sigismund and their father Johann Jakob were lutenists at the Palatin court, first in Düsseldorf, then in Heidelberg and Mannheim.

The first two movements, *Andante* and *Presto*, are played through without pause. The andante brings to mind the adagio of the first *Concert*: it is in the same spirit, as well as the same key, and the theme construction is similar. The presto is made up of a dense exchange of themes with both instruments in constant conversation. The lute part has no cause for envy towards those of Leopold, given its virtuosity. A marked difference with the first *Concert*, however, is the third movement, also an *Andante*, that stays in the key of b flat instead of descending into the relative minor key of G. Mattheson’s description of b flat major, ‘sumptuous but modest’, is very fitting here, as a calm serenity reigns for six minutes, while a pastoral atmosphere pleasantly floats in the second section with pedal tones reminiscent of shepherd’s pipes. The concluding *Allegro* contains no less than two short *reprises*. Judging from the repeated chords of the lute, Sigismund undoubtedly wished to let the flautist’s virtuosity take the foreground, rather than needlessly embellish the lute part. In fact, the lute only dialogues with the melody from bar 50 onwards, challenging the flautist’s respiratory endurance.

The *Concert d'un Luth avec la Flute traversiere. Del S.L. Weis. (WeissSW 9), in F major*, also wears its naturally noble tonal quality quite well. The initial *Adagio* has a slow march feel, not unlike that of a wedding march. The following *Allegro* is a four voice fugue, three of the voices being held throughout by the lute, save for an orchestral style octave passage near the piece's end. Its joyous exuberance is suddenly interrupted by an enigmatic *Amoroso* in d minor, conjuring up emotions more tormented than amorous, perhaps even those of an impossible, desperate love. Its passion is abundant, even obsessive, demonstrated by a superb baroque *enflé* by the flute shortly before the piece's conclusion. The inconclusive cadence adds to the mystery in that it anticipates a next movement also in d minor. Yet, we return to the key of F major for the final jubilant *Allegro*.

We will call the next work *Duo 4 in g minor (WeissSW 14)*. Nothing, other than clues in the music itself, indicates that this work is a duo. Perhaps Weiss also played this work in duet with violin, or Baroque oboe. While the initial *Adagio* is connected to the *Concerts* by its title and its spirit, the other movements are similar to most of the solo works in this manuscript. The *adagio* is perhaps Weiss's most beautiful ensemble piece along with the *chaconne* whose thematic cells can already be found here. With its well-chosen modulations and entrancing flute part enriched by colourful harmonies on the lute, the piece is permeated with the wisdom of a profound incantation.

The *Gavotte* is bouncy but gracious. The themes skip almost humorously through a somewhat contradictory and omnipresent melancholy. The contrast of very low bass notes on lute and soaring passages on the wooden flute creates a very unique blending of timbres. While on paper, both the *Sarabande* and the *Menuet* seem like short pieces of little interest, they prove themselves as striking, mature musical constructions under the fingers of the performer. At bars 3, 5 and 7 of the *sarabande*, we find proof, in my opinion, that *appoggiatura* in Baroque tablature, at times, simply cannot be executed other than in long note values. It is clear that playing the ornaments rapidly in this case would interrupt the flow of the musical discourse. As mentioned above, the *minuet* is almost identical to the solo piece in F of the same name at page 11. In the second part, despite my wish to create a non-contrasting flute part in a passage sounding no more no less like...Poulenc (!), the feeling of a 'nod' to a future time remains nonetheless. This comes as no surprise when one takes into consideration the "20<sup>th</sup> century style" themes in ancient music, notably in 17<sup>th</sup> century French lute music. A feeling of *galanterie* is omnipresent in this *minuet*, accentuated by chromaticism in my flute part inspired by Weiss himself (see for example the prelude and fugue in E flat major). This effect will be repeated in the *chaconne*, and I defend it in any context where themes are easily predictable. Weiss is a composer, as is his colleague and friend Telemann, who feels comfortable inside a pre-established mold, but offers delightful surprises at certain moments to spice up an otherwise traditional musical vocabulary.

Exceptionally, the *Bourée* is placed after the *sarabande* and even after the *minuet*. Could it be because the final *chaconne* starts off slowly? Whatever the case, it is obvious that this order creates a logical rhythmic balance. This *bourree* is very technically demanding, due to the incessant exchange of melodic lines between lute and flute. The last movement, a magnificent *Ciacona*, by sheer beauty, transcends the need for repetition of variations, incidentally not indicated in the tablature. Both lutenists and guitarists have been playing this work for years as a solo. Indeed, if we vary the chordal sections with arpeggios and ornamentation, the result becomes a very satisfactory solo, which brings me to reiterate the possibility of Weiss playing such versatile pieces in one format or another. If the piece were played as a solo, the *reprises* would be justified. However, it is clear that as a duet, the result is splendid.

With the *Duo 5 in d minor (WeissSW 20)*, our presentation of the London Manuscript's works ends. Three of its movements bear the inscription *Weis 1719*. We have added the *Largo* p.117 (*WeissSW 5\**), an isolated piece located seventy five pages prior to this duo, which serves perfectly as a *sarabande*. As was the case with *Duo 4*, only the musical structure of the lute part indicates in all likelihood that these pieces are duets, with its sudden alternation between voluble melodic motifs and simple chord progressions. Nevertheless, the *Preled: presto* is visibly for lute solo, but acts as an excellent introduction for the following movement. A true whirlwind in the style of Bach's *toccatas*, it unleashes its fury by passing through an *Adagio* section that builds tension before releasing it again in another *presto* sequence. In this dramatic context, the effects of *verre brisé* (vibrato) and percussive "buzzing" bass (one could say *alla Bartok*) are of course intentional given their typical Baroque spirit. The *Un poco andante* is majestic yet reserved. Pedals on the dominant at section ends enhance a dreamlike quality. Dialogue is tight between the two instruments, as it is in the following *La Badinage*, with reason, given its title: 'The Jesting'. This movement serves as a *courante*, and has all its characteristic traits. It brings to mind Bach's closely titled *Badinerie*, also for flute (and orchestra).

With its dialogue composed of rapidly ascending exchanges creating a harrowing conversation effect, the *Largo* simply astonishes the listener. In the aforementioned spirit of comparing similarities between themes from different musical periods, I unabashedly mention that the initial melodic motif found for the flute is inspired by a song from the seventies progressive pop group King Crimson. This *largo* could have contained *reprises* for the two sections, the first ending exactly at the halfway point of the piece in a conclusive cadence. However, Weiss preferred continuity without repetition, the drama already having been spent, so to say. And so by ending the *largo* with an inconclusive, as opposed to a conclusive, cadence, therefore suggesting complementary movement, continuity is preserved. Luckily, the following movement, *Le Sicilien*, rallies perfectly with the end of the *largo* and even creates a sort of epilogue. In addition, by placing this *largo* in a sonata, we create a similar situation as in the third *Concert*, where a movement also ends inconclusively. This *sicilienne* expresses a kind of bitter sweetness, or perhaps unrequited tenderness. The rich harmonic progression gives the discourse a certain bounce. What a change of scenery the *Menuet* offers us ! In the relative major key of f, its mood is of the greatest nonchalance. Finally, a spirited and resolute *Gigue* brilliantly ends this last of S.L.Weiss's duets.

Michel Cardin

# The Late baroque lute Seen through S.L. Weiss

by Michel Cardin ©1994 and 2005

This article should help to get a deeper understanding of our process of perception and mental organisation when we listen to a late Baroque lute interpretation, by examining the fundamental elements that are sonority in itself and the unique sound aesthetic of the instrument. We will try after, in the Appendix 2, to show the enormous preponderance of ornamentation in the musical discourse. In this view, there is maybe no better example than the music of Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750), the great genius of the instrument.

## Sonority

For a better definition of lute sonority, it is useful to compare it to the sonority of the harpsichord. In the early Baroque era the pre-eminence of the lute as a polyphonic solo instrument inspired the harpsichordists of the same period to adopt many of the characteristic features of lute playing including 'style brisé', mordents and broken chords. Froberger was to visit Paris and subsequently come under the influence of the lute master Gautier, while coincidentally establishing the pattern of movements for the keyboard suite in accordance with lute practice. As we advance toward the late Baroque, the opposite tendency can be observed. Lute writing began increasingly to resemble those compositional techniques more readily associated with the harpsichord (arpeggiation, runs, wide voice separation, etc.).

In my view the stylistic cross-fertilization of the period tend to justify the natural inclinations of a lutenist toward greater usage of harpsichord-like embellishments while performing the compositions of the late Baroque. In the process, one will realise that the subtitle "for lute or harpsichord" added by J.S. Bach in a few of his works is not strange but quite logical. (1) This stylistic fusion was extended even further with the invention of the lute-harpsichord, this keyboard instrument with gut strings conceived to imitate the acoustical properties of the lute. Though sometimes regarded as an experimental instrument, (it was advocated by J.S. Bach, who owned two of them) (2) the lute-harpsichord had in fact been in existence for several years previous, responding partly to the demands of both the lute and the harpsichord repertoires. (3)

The relationship between lute and harpsichord goes even further. Indeed, as attested to by Luise Gottsched and numerous other witnesses of the late Baroque, musical expression of this period still reached its peak in the form of lute music, of which Weiss was the master of *affekten* thanks to his mastery of *forte* and *piano* dynamics. The combined ingredients of a violin-like cantabile, the sustained harmonies of a keyboard instrument and its unique timbre colours made of the lute the ideal vehicle for the expression of musical thought. The only aspect of the new musical *zeitgeist* that could not be adequately expressed on the lute was loudness, a feature that contributed to the extinction of the instrument. Though the piano evolved from the harpsichord, it must surely be true that the motivation to exploit the wide dynamic range of the piano was seated in a desire to emulate lute music, exemplified as it was by formidable masters from the time of Fancesco da Milano (known as the Michelangelo of Music) through to Weiss. When taking into account the important aesthetic principle of a solo repertoire replete with an abundance of dynamic contrast, it becomes quite plausible that the lute contributed, in tandem with the harpsichord, to the development of the piano. It is also interesting to note that, according to the musicological research of Dr. Johanne Couture, no publications for harpsichord were created in France between 1529 and 1670. We note, interestingly enough that harpsichordists of the time could read fluently from lute tablature and we have several indications that would support the thesis that lute repertoire was considered also to be harpsichord repertoire. (4) This, in my view, goes one step further from the idea of transcription, which was also widely practiced at the time, as much on the lute as on any other instrument. This linkage remains intact until the end of the Baroque era, a fact revealed by the flexibility of the repertoire and the presence of the lute-harpsichord.

One of the fundamental differences between the sounds of the lute and harpsichord lies in the intensity of the string attacks. Harpsichord articulations are characterised by an equality of attack amplitude while a wide variety of attacks are an inevitable by-product of lute playing. These technical considerations contribute to the aesthetic essence of each instrument providing a delightful, much-needed contrast. In a similar vein it could be argued that the lute, or guitar, is compensated for a lack of polyphonic possibilities normally associated with keyboard instruments by the combined resources of sustained harmony and the unique expressiveness of articulation found only on stringed instruments with neck. As a harmonic/melodic instrument with movable frets, the lute lent itself readily to experimentation involving musical temperament. Notwithstanding the still-living disbelief of some of today's musicians, it is worth recalling that in the midst of this strenuous research period we can find a few series of twenty-four pieces in each of the tonalities that have been composed prior to the Well-tempered Klavier by J.S. Bach. Some of the composers engaged in the creation of this type of work include Gorzanis (lute), Wilson (theorbo), and Bartolotti (guitar). (5)

Another important aspect of sonority is stringing. While made exclusively from gut at the beginning of the Baroque, it was quite common by the middle of the seventeenth century to find, for the solo lute, examples of strings made from overspun metal. This manufacturing technique, still believed by many to be relatively modern, was nonetheless described extensively in works such as the *Introduction to the Skill of Musik* by John Playford (London 1664). (6) This technological advancement, along with the influence of the harpsichord, was responsible for the marked change in style discerned in lute compositions written near the end of the seventeenth century. The bass strings made of wound metal gave added brilliance and sustain to the sound, causing an inevitable change in the conception of works written for the instrument. It comes as no surprise, then, to find in the works of Silvius Leopold Weiss for example, the use of long detached bass notes in conjunction with an elasticity of discourse involving continuous turnover of note values.

In this context, one is left wondering to what extent the performer would muffle the open bass strings. Indeed, the whole question of methodically muffling unwanted strings is central to any lucid reading of this music, with preoccupation of the precise moment of muffling. (Should we stop the string before the next note?, simultaneously with the next note?, after the next bass?). I would even say that the personality of an interpreter is reflected in strong proportion by his or her way of dealing with bass muffling, because this influences so much the sound atmosphere and the musical discourse. Have a listen to your preferred lutenists' recordings and then the others: don't you realise

how important it is in your opinion? The playing is directly affected in terms of accentuation, articulation, volume, legato, thus all the lyrical aspects of the work. (7)

As for the instruments, it is quite clear that Weiss and his Germanic contemporaries were to favour the models in the style of Johann Christian Hoffmann's, who lived in Leipzig and was apparently a close companion of J.S.Bach, himself a good friend of Weiss (we know, for example that Bach is named in the last will and testament of Hoffmann). (8) The preponderance of this particular model was possibly due, like the change of musical style, to the wound metal strings discussed earlier. (9) However, it is sometimes necessary to use a current model lute because some works contain a few chromatic bass pitches that could only be obtained through transposition, at the cost of disfiguring certain melodic lines. The last five bass notes on a theorbo-lute can only be played as open strings, completely off the fingerboard, due to their connection with the second pegbox, whereas on a "standard" lute only the last two courses are off the fingerboard, leaving the other bass strings over the fretboard, and therefore susceptible to chromatic alteration by the left hand. Though not frequently encountered, this situation arises in a few Weiss works (9 pieces on a total of 237 in the London ms, which actually implies six complete sonatas if all the movements are to be performed), enough to confirm that the master occasionally composed with this type of instrument in hand, necessitating an alternation between two instruments for the performers. The sizes of the instruments are generally similar except for the pegboxes. The strings vibrating length of two of my lutes (a theorbated Hoffmann and a standard Burkholzer-Edlinger) are almost the same: 70cm and 71cm. One notices while comparing the two instruments that the basses of the theorbo-lute are quite bright while those of the standard lute have a sombre but warm quality.

One last detail, of paramount importance for everyone but raising sometimes worthless discussions, is the nails. Whether one uses them or not (both options were in use before just like today), the difficulty of getting a good tone is always there since the fundamentals of sonority are at the start and at the end of our practice work: 1) the choice and maniac precision of the angle of attack of the string, this being for every single note, and 2) the shape and the suppleness of the part of the finger that makes the attack (flesh or nail). (10)

### Sound Aesthetic

We should likewise consider the most important aspect regarding the Baroque lute: the relationship between the score and the ultimate sonic experience. Simply put, little relationship exists between what is written and what is heard. A score for Baroque lute - whether in tablature or modern notation - gives to someone who does not play the instrument the same effect as the reduction of a symphony to a simplified work for piano: one simply cannot imagine the variety of sounds and colours. (11) The sound of the Renaissance lute, for example, with its tight counterpoint, follows the score closely. There is an obvious relationship between the aural experience and the written score. The same can be said about the guitar; the number of strings played and the number of identifiable tone colours are almost identical. We have of course a few exceptions like the *campanella* effect. But with the Baroque lute, we suddenly and frankly come upon a universe of shimmering sounds like those of a harp, serious and lingering like those of an organ, all the while infinitely diversified not only because of the double stops at the unison or at the octave and the numerous open strings with their rich harmonics, but precisely because of the *prolonged notes*. This gives a discrete sonic richness not readily apparent by a casual reading of the score. As in the orchestral situation, few contrapuntal voices are needed to create musical discourse – usually two - but many instruments amplify and enrich these voices through varied instrumentation or, as in the case of the baroque lute, many strings *prolong* the melodic-harmonic information. This overlapping of durations, under conscious control, creates in reality other lines. This problematic is not the same as the problematic of bass muffling, even though both interact with each other.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled 'Courante'. It consists of eight staves of music. The notation is highly complex, featuring many accidentals, slurs, and markings that resemble lute tablature (letters like 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd', 'e', 'f', 'g' placed below the notes). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The music is written in a cursive, historical style. The final staff includes a first ending bracket and a repeat sign.

*Courante from solo sonata n° 5 S-C7 in c minor, London Manuscript*

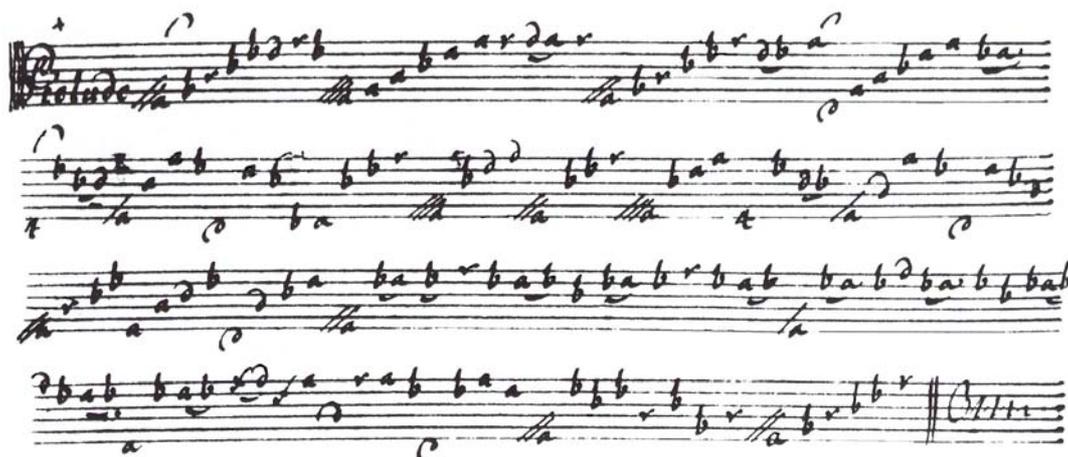
If tablatures or orchestral score reductions are always necessary, it is because they give a quick and clear access to the works; they are nevertheless only a first step in the comprehension of a musical composition. (12) Let's continue now with our second step examination.

It is true that at the keyboard the musician also asks himself how long he must keep the keys depressed, but for him this problem is quickly solved by the number of notes and their often generous flux. With the Baroque lute the number of notes is always small and, as in the case in both a slow and fast movement, if one would write:

1. The real length of each note (never the same because of the perpetual string changes)
2. Their real tonality (taking into account the doubling of strings) and
3. Each indication of timbre (that vary constantly),

it is certainly not an exaggeration to say that several staves would be necessary to render the two written voices into several precise voices.

Even upon superficially listening to the Baroque lute one can be fascinated. The listener is seduced by the constant movement between a coherent musical discourse - some signing lines - and a mosaic of interior nuances fleetingly tasted due to the fact that they are too complex to be explicitly perceived.

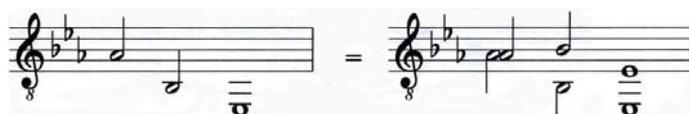


*Prelude from solo sonata n° 6 S-C10, London Manuscript*

The analogy of the mosaic, or a stained glass window, is appropriate. The rational mind perceives a general image, simple as a sketch. Simultaneously, however, the intuition perceives hundreds of elementary components, meaningless in themselves but which merge into a coherent image. Let's choose, to begin with, deliberately a simple example: at the end of the prelude of Sonata no 6 S-C10, from the London Manuscript by L.S.Weiss, we have a cadence which on paper is exasperatingly banal:



We perceive a rather illogical, completely disjunct bass line. This same line, however, when played with double strings is not only conjunct but enriched in an orchestral fashion:



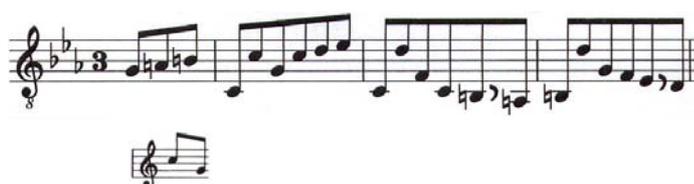
When played on the instrument, the superior voice becomes:



This banal example, re-evaluated according to these insights, assumes a density of at least five voices. (Changes of left-hand positions and the nuanced attack of the right hand will even necessitate certain indications of tone colour). Nonetheless, rather than contenting himself with numerous furtively superposed additional lines, a genius like Weiss constructs long melodic strata while taking advantage of judicious interval selection favouring the independence of the voicings.

With the strings resonating independently, one may position their listening according to the horizontal tracings of the melody with reference to what I call 'strings-durations'. It is thus possible for each string to carry an independent voice. The isolated 'strangeness' of these voice fragments (thin and syncopated) is camouflaged by the overall direction of the line, which is in itself enigmatic because of the numerous voicings to which a melodic fragment could belong.

A good example would be the courante of Weiss's fifth sonata in C minor. At the outset one finds a broken line, sprayed out over two or three registers:



The natural resonance of the strings allows us to hear a dialogue, and the superior voice intones the melodic cell which is constantly renewed up to the end:



(In passing, it should be mentioned that this two-note cell unifies the entire C minor sonata: it is present throughout all six movements.) Through the action of the held notes, or 'strings-durations', the superior voice contains within it two other distinct voices, whose uniqueness become evident in the sixth and seventh measures:



One observes that in these measures, one of the voices becomes prolonged in terms of note values while the other fills the time with the usage of the previously mentioned melodic cell. This gives the illusion of a ternary measure:



In other words, the voices define each other by means of rhythmic syncopations and prolonged note values. In this context the weak beats and thinner material are, to say the least, eminently reusable.

Due to the difficulty of playing several simultaneous independent voices, Weiss became master of a technique wherein several levels of musical thoughts are elaborated in a deceptively simple melodic continuum. This is a much more elaborated process than in solo violin or solo cello works like those of Bach since they do not imply duration overlapping.

We must not diminish the importance of the contribution of the hemiolas (secondary meters caused by accents and syncopations) to the elasticity of the durations. The following passage could have remained symmetrically moulded in its ternary metre, but the hemiola (in this case a temporary binary metre) creates an interesting diversion while prolonging in the bass the aforementioned two-note cell:



During the second section, dominated from one end to the other by the inverted version of the same cell:  supervenes a very astute pedal passage due to the fact that the first note of the cell becomes the second note of a countermelody formed by the same cell in its original form, but prolonged and straddling the bar-line.

What appears to be :



becomes in reality :



After the listener identifies this florid thematic treatment, he or she can resituate at his leisure the countermelody which (behold the genius of Weiss!) remains very cantabile in spite of the limitations imposed by this multi-melodic process. One can reconstruct the melody either with the charming syncopation or with the more 'normal' strong beats:



and it is even possible to imagine the superior voice stretched over four beats:



This ambiguity among different rhythmic realities, due to technical artifice, forms an integral part of the aesthetic of this music which, as we have seen, is inseparable from the nature of the instrument. Like a mosaic, the contour of each coloured square becomes part of the overall image through diverse associations.

Michel Cardin

#### NOTES

1. The heading of Bach's manuscript of the Prelude, fugue and Allegro BWV 998 bears the mention: *Prelude pour la luth. ò Cembal. par J.S.Bach.*
2. In the *Specificacio* of Bach's goods, made after his death, are listed two lute-harpsichords and one lute made by Johann Christian Hoffmann.
3. Please refer to Bruce Gustafson and Willard Martin in "The Art of the Lautenwerk", CD by Kim Heindel, Kingdom 1990.
4. See the doctoral thesis of Johanne Couture, McGill University, Montréal, 2002
5. See the list of works by Gorzanis and Wilson in the Grooves Dictionary, and, about Bartolotti, the article by Massimo Moscardo in *Les Cahiers de la Guitare*, no 53, Paris, january 1995.
6. Not to be confounded with the other 18 editions, at the same period, of this same popular work.
7. See examples of bass muffling in *Method for the Baroque lute* by Toyohiko Satoh, Tree Edition, Munich 1987.
8. Please refer to the dictionary of luthiers *Die Geigen und Lautenmacher, vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Schneider, Tutzing 1975.
9. In a letter to the author of this text, Joël Dugot, lute maker and curator of the Music Museum of the Cité de la musique in Paris said: "*I view the appearance of the 'shortened' double-pegbox of the type made by J.C. Hoffmann as proof of the utilisation of wound strings, at least for the five bass courses*".
10. See the letter by Weiss to Mattheson as mentioned by D.A.Smith in: *Baron and Weiss contra Mattheson: in defense of the lute*, LSA Journal 1973.
11. Hans Neeman, in the preface of his edition of works by Reusner and Weiss, in the series *Das Erbe Deutscher Musik* (1938), already said: « *...und ihr wahrer Wert wie die Klangfülle des im Notenbild zuweilen "mager" scheinenden Satzes enthüllt sich erst bei meisterlichem Erklängen auf der originalgemässen Laute* » : « (...)the sonority of the musical phrase sometimes seems thin in the notation and is only revealed when sounds mightily the lute faithfully conformable to the original instrument."
12. See : *Editing XVIIIth century lute music:the works of S.L.Weiss* par D.A Smith, in *Le luth et sa musique* , Éditions du CNRS, Paris 1984, p. 257-8.

# Ornamentation principles

## And examples, or “*How I embellish an Angloise by Weiss*”

By Michel Cardin ©1994 & 2005

### Ornamentation

It would seem advisable to examine the use of ornamentation, an issue of paramount importance in the music of the late baroque lute. As was explained in the preceding Appendix, we now know that the lute tablature of this period was deliberately succinct, giving little visual indication of the richness of sonority that can be realised in actual live performance. This paucity of notation applies equally to the ornamentation. The minimal usage of very rudimentary embellishments could leave one with the impression that the composer was somewhat lacking in imagination, caring little for variation of melodic line even during repeated sections.

This would explain why the music of Weiss has been frequently dismissed as banal by both musicologists and performers for quite some time. Today's lutenists know that these parts were intentionally left in a simplified format by the composer who, as common practice dictated, had internalised the wide variety of existing expressive possibilities. Performers were expected not only to share this knowledge of performance conventions, but also to express their personal inventiveness with each reading of the text. In this respect the parts become akin to jazz charts wherein the general outline is provided in order to give a performer sufficient information to share in the creative process, making of the notation a somewhat different piece with each performance.

It would be worthwhile at this point to draw up a list of Baroque embellishments, giving at the same time brief modern definitions for each. This list has been provided by Michel Pignolet de Montéclair in his work entitled *Principes de Musique*, published in 1736. Baroque music aficionados should consult works of this sort, if only to gain an appreciation for the meticulous precision of the authors. Musicians of the calibre of Quantz, the great flute virtuoso who performed often with Weiss (1), have contributed to this body of scholarship. In the case of Quantz, the reader is rewarded with insightful explanations of the most detailed sort imaginable.

Here are the 22 embellishments, some of which are called ornaments, according to Montéclair. All are usable in any section of a piece with the exception of the four last embellishments, which are usually reserved for repeated sections. One will notice the primarily vocal nature of these devices, most of which are also used by instrumentalists.

### Resume of Baroque embellishments

1. *Son filé* (straight tone).....a sustained note with no vibrato (senza vib.)
  2. *Son enflé* (pushed tone).....a crescendo without vibrato
  3. *Son diminué* (pulled tone).....a decrescendo without vibrato
  4. *Flatté* or *flattement* (close shake).....a light rapid vibrato
  5. *Balancement* or *tremolo* (organ shake).....a heavy accentuated vibrato
- \*
6. *Port de voix* .....an inverted appoggiatura (inferior)
  7. *Coulé* .....a "normal" appoggiatura (superior)
  8. *Pinçé* (open shake).....an inferior mordent
  9. *Martellement* .....an inverted (superior) mordent
  10. *Tremblement appuyé* or *perlé* (trill/ shake).....a complete trill
  11. *Tremblement subit* (quick trill).....a short rapid trill
  12. *Tremblement feint* (accelerated trill).....a trill that begins slowly, gradually  
becoming very short and rapid
  13. *Tremblement doublé* (double relish).....a very long trill containing two grupettos
  14. *Tour de gosier* ("throat turn")(single relish).....a grupetto
- \*
15. *Son glissé* .....a tied unmeasured anticipation using son filé
  16. *Accent* (springer).....a sudden interruption ( in the guise of an  
elevated sigh) of a long note prior to its repetition
  17. *Chute* (glissando).....a soft falling from one note to another
  18. *Sanglot* (interjection).....an accentuation of the words Ah! Ho! Alas!
- \*
19. *Trait* (run).....between two primary tones, one is to play conjunctly and  
rapidly all of the notes in an accented manner (detached)
  20. *Coulade*.....as with the trait, only lightly while slurring the notes
  21. *Passage* (changing notes).....as with the trait or coulade, only with freer note usage  
(conjunct and/or disjunct mixtures)
  22. *Diminutions*.....rhythmic variations of many kinds using rapid notes while  
following basic harmonic structures and rhythmic accents.

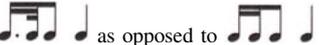
To all of the above we must add *rubato* (as it was clearly understood at the time), “*notes inégales*” (see Gavotte of sonata no 5) which could be anything from the systematic usage of the French Style to the occasional treatment in the Italian Style, and the use of arpeggios (*arpègements* - broken chords in the manner of a harpist).

\* \* \*

While acknowledging a great liberty of ornamental expression (embellishments of types 19 through 22 allow for a virtually unlimited range of options) one must never forget, so the Baroque musicians constantly remind us, the role of good taste (“*Le bon gout*”) as a final arbiter of artistic license (2).

#### How I embellish an Angloise by Weiss

This Angloise is a little gem buried within the London Manuscript. Indeed it is hard to believe that this short and deceptively simple little piece contains in reality so much musical potential, to be revealed by repetitions.

The ‘notes inégales’ (mainly the pattern ) are more appropriate, obviously, for most of the work, though a few measures would be better served by the ‘notes égales’. The exchange is done easily and naturally if one is guided by a concern for good balance. It becomes easy as a result to determine whether a line is too heavy or nicely flowing; awkward or natural. I should like in this respect to refer the reader to an illuminating article on this very subject by Gérard Rebours in *Les Cahiers de la Guitare*, no. 26 (3). Furthermore, the repeated arpeggios with first, second and third fingers in *i m a*, *a m i* patterns will directly incite this type of rhythm unless, of course, the tempo is very quick. In my opinion a fast tempo would cause a certain lack of depth and unnaturalness to the resultant sound of the lute. In order to give an example of this distribution of inégales vs. égales rhythms it would seem preferable to present the piece while indicating the appropriate technique, acknowledging that other combinations are certainly possible. It would even seem desirable to vary the mix from one performance to another. This should confirm, once again, a true similarity with jazz.

Before comparing the ornamented repetition with the piece as written, it should be mentioned that in the five available sources the piece is titled *Paisana* (Warsaw ms), *Paisane* (one of the Vienna ms), and *Angloise* (the other Viennese ms, London ms, Buenos Aires ms). As is often the case with multiple sources of works by Weiss, all versions are similar, with slight variations from one to another.

The guiding principle in my view is that ornamentation should enhance, and not detract from, the lyric qualities of the contrapuntal voices.

#### THE FIRST SECTION

**Measure 2 :** Small diminution, through repetition of two notes.

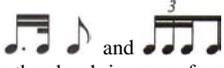
**Measure 4 :** The ornament  in the tablature would indicate a *coulé*, a *martellement* or a *tremblement*. While a long *coulé* would seem to be the ornament of choice for the first time, I would recommend, this being a typical half-cadence, a shake (complete trill) ending with a single relish and fermata, to be used for the second. All of this adds a certain grace to this charming theme. It is interesting to note that this ornament is assigned to a middle voice, not the customary superior voice, in one of the Vienna manuscripts, with a result that is equally satisfactory.

**Measure 5 :** Played squarely on the second beat, a *martellement* would enhance the main cellule, which will be played, it should be remembered, a total of sixty-two times in two and a half minutes, counting the repeats. (Seventy times in a little over three minutes if my suggestion of two additional *petites reprises* is followed).

**Measure 6 :** A *martellement*, this time on the preceding note, mixed with a twirled arpeggio, will help camouflage the repeated cellule.

**Measure 8 :** With a gentle anticipation of the *e* of the second beat, indicated as a sixteenth note, the line sings differently but remains as pleasant as before. Very little modification is required to alter the line.

**Measure 10 :** Use the same pattern and ornament as in measure 8, although I recommend a triplet to rejuvenate the line. The triplet is created by a brief *coulade* that falls spontaneously enough under the fingers.

**Meas 12 to 18 :**  are used instead of eighth notes, by unfolding the thirds and triads from the top down (except in meas 18 where the chord is spun from the bass upwards). It is worth adding a note to the first chord of bars 15, 16 and 17, in order to repeat the dynamic triplet effect of bar 14. This kind of diminution can be included in the typical lute effects known as *notes séparées* (disjunct notes). It was interesting to discover that in one of the Vienna sources, meas 16 and 17 are supposed to be repeated. Without having seen the manuscript, I intuitively felt the need for this repetition (at least during the second time through) and was doubly gratified to see confirmation of this need, written in Weiss's own hand! In this same Vienna copy there are important differences with respect to meas 12 through 14:



On the other hand, it must be stated that the octave leaps in meas 12 to 14 have been added to the tablature by replacing one of the three *a*'s on the sixth course with a contra *a* (6) on the thirteenth course. It is quite easy to see this contra *a* above the other *a* note: . The composer has had a change of mind here, as is frequently the case in the London Manuscript. Most of these corrections are in his own hand, proving that he retained final supervision of the editing, the copying being done by himself and five assistants. All of this has been established by Douglas Alton Smith.

These octave leaps can be found in two of the five versions. It is quite clear however, that the other three versions were originally designed for the eleven-course lute. The first of these other three versions has three repeated *a*'s on the sixth course, while the second has the same plus three contra *a*'s under the basses. This is not a suggested octave leap, rather a possible choice between two registers (a choice precipitated, no doubt, by the acquisition of a brand new thirteen course lute!). As for the third version, the problem is nonexistent since the different structure as outlined in the above diagram is used. At any rate, apart from the addendum to the second one, none of these versions have a contra *a* or contra *b*. All of these editing discrepancies will also be found in bars 41 to 43.

Regarding the bass dampening in the first section, only one would seem crucial: the *e* on the first beat of meas 18. (This said, the desire to dampen will, of course, vary from one lutenist to another.) The numerous octave leaps and the descending lines that finish on long notes (as opposed to the ascending ones which require thumb muffling) tend to diminish the need for dampening.

#### THE SECOND SECTION

**Meas 19 to 27 :** One notices immediately that the beginning of the second section sounds as though it were lifted directly from a rock and roll or blues song! The similarity is even carried to the point of repeating the theme a major second higher at meas 24. (Yes, we're still in 1719!). For the repeat I would recommend using again the ornamentation of meas 6 in meas 19 and 21, this time followed by a bouncing variant in meas 20 and 22. Everything can be played in the same way from bars 24 to 27 since the left hand simply climbs, in parallel motion, up a tone on the fingerboard.

This is one among hundreds of examples that shows how the placing of the fingers on the neck will spontaneously inspire a particular choice of ornament. The variations found in meas 20 and 22 (also 25 and 27) are actually necessary since a perfect replication of the ornamentation in meas 6 would be an impossibility. This is a case where a technical limitation has inspired an imaginative response that

is in fact no more difficult, drawing as it does, on ornamental inspiration from the finger configurations presented to it. In this practice however, one must control the musical discourse and relentlessly eliminate mediocre “finds”.

**Meas 32 to 34 :** Since this sequence is stated three times in a row, it might be better to avoid embellishing it too much, preserving in due course the freshness of the line. *Pincés* are quite acceptable here. I would recommend even the use of a *pincé* (open shake) as soon as the first time, at meas 34, breaking up the potential for monotony. I would then add two of these *pincés* at meas 33 and 34 during the repeat. A greater definition of embellishment can be achieved by beginning this last *pincé* with a *port de voix*, having played the preceding note with a *coulé*.

**Meas 36 :** This is where the *petite reprise* could begin, though I agree that it is rather long. Since, however, the piece itself is quite short, a little lengthening in this region could be quite justifiable. I will even add a second *petite reprise* (quite short this time) to the very end. Weiss has indicated throughout his oeuvre a large number of *petites reprises* ranging from very brief ones to those of the extended longer variety. A *coulade* in triplet rhythm would have a nice rebounding effect at the reappearance of the initial theme in meas 36. For that matter, this effect could be used at both the regular repeat and at the *petite reprise*.

**Meas 39 & 40 :** Sixteenth note diminutions in *notes égales*, used the third time, will mask the motif temporarily, creating a gentle floating effect in the process.

**Meas 41 to 43 :** Same section as in bars 12 to 14, except that the basses are all in the same register. The composer did not feel the need for octave leaps, though they have been retained in the Warsaw copy. If one wishes to displace the notes as in meas 12 to 18 (inverted *notes séparées*) for the third time, one could re-insert the octave leaps for the second time, mainly for reasons of equilibrium.

One could at this point consider the use of an expressive device unique to the lute which I call ‘crescendo by timbral accumulation’. At meas 41 use the thumb to strike the fundamental only. At meas 42 both strings of the course are struck, changing already the sonic atmosphere and the same is done at bar 43, only this time at the intensity of fortissimo. Considering it useful, natural and expressive, I make frequent use of this type of colour phasing. I even saw a tablature in which the lutenist-composer (I forgot whom) used a precise sign to differentiate the two attacks.

**Meas 47 to 49 :** Since the *petite reprise* adds a third performance of this material to the preceding two, it might be useful to think of it in terms of incrementally increasing the ornamentation, the third repetition being of the moderately saturated kind, including not only *coulés* and *ports de voix* but also, as in meas 49, the *notes séparées*, albeit in a more traditional way.

**Meas 51 to 54 :** It could be entirely appropriate to add a fourth repetition of this material through the usage of a second, smaller *petite reprise*. A freshness of pattern conducive to the lively spirit of the end of the work could be realised through the usage of leaping thirty-second note figures (meas 51 & 52) created by the superposition of *notes séparées* and divisions .

**Meas 53 :** The ornament  instead of  on the first beat means that we have here an inverted appoggiatura or *port de voix* . A double open shake could be used the second time, allowing us to be more discrete with the third and fourth repetitions, gently flavouring those with a single open shake. This discretion is required to compensate for the florid saturation of the preceding measures.

**Meas 54 :** Using a *small bridge*, the first ending can be elegantly connected to the first *petite reprise*. I must confess to a certain desire to 'go bananas' at this point. Let's just say that I have successfully resisted the temptation to improvise a furious cadenza, playing instead a nice ascending scale pattern.

Concerning the dynamics, amplitude contrasts could be reversed in the ‘blues’ section , using *forte* for meas 19 to 23 and *piano* for meas 24 through 28 and switching the values during the repetition. A few works by Weiss and his colleagues have been marked *p* and *f* in similar sequential passages.

There are a few more bass dampenings in the second section, found at bars 38, 48, 50, 53 and 54. The last two are particularly tricky due to the speed at which they must be performed.

Michel Cardin

#### NOTES

1. J. Joachim Quantz, *Essai d'une méthode pour apprendre à jouer de la flûte traversière, avec plusieurs remarques pour servir au bon goût dans la musique*, original French edition, éd. C. Friedrich Voss, Berlin 1752.
2. Montéclair more particularly deplors in his book the excess of fashion which makes musicians “disfigure the nobleness of simple melodies with too many ridiculous variations”.
3. « *Comment jouer aujourd'hui ces musiques du passé ?* » (How to play today this music from the past?) article by Gérard Rebours, Les Cahiers de la Guitare, Paris, avril 1988.
4. For the complete updated list of Weiss sources and concordances, see Peter Steur's Database web site at <http://mss.slweiss.de/index.php?lang=eng>

(below : The whole piece in three pages)



## ANGLOISE

(S. L. Weiss, 1719)

*Première partie*

Measures 1-6 of the first system. The treble clef contains eighth-note patterns, and the bass clef contains a simple accompaniment. Measure numbers 2, 4, 5, and 6 are boxed above the staff.

Measures 7-12 of the first system. The treble clef continues with eighth-note patterns, and the bass clef has a steady accompaniment. Measure numbers 8, 10, and 12 are boxed above the staff.

Measures 13-17 of the first system. Measure 18 is the start of the REPRISE. Measure numbers 18 and 19 are boxed above the staff.

Measures 18-23 of the first system. Measure 20 features a trill (tr) and a fermata. Measure numbers 2, 4, 5, and 6 are boxed above the staff.

Measures 24-29 of the first system. Measure 26 has a triplet of eighth notes. Measure numbers 8, 10, and 12 are boxed above the staff.

Measures 30-35 of the first system. Measure 33 has a triplet of eighth notes. Measure numbers 18 and 19 are boxed above the staff.

*Fin de la 1<sup>ère</sup> section**Deuxième partie*

Measures 36-41 of the second part. The treble clef starts with a forte (f) dynamic and ends with a piano (p) dynamic. Measure numbers 19 and 20 are boxed above the staff.

27 32

34 36 39

40 41 43

47 49 51 53

54 REPRISE 19 (piano)

24 (forte)

30

Musical notation for measures 36 and 37. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 36 features a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 37 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the treble and a quarter note in the bass. A star symbol is present in the bass staff of measure 37.

Musical notation for measures 45 and 46. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 45 shows chords in the treble and quarter notes in the bass. Measure 46 features eighth notes in the treble and quarter notes in the bass. Star symbols are present in the bass staff of measures 45 and 46.

Musical notation for measures 53 and 54. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 53 includes a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 54 features a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Star symbols are present in the bass staff of measures 53 and 54.

1<sup>ere</sup> PETITE REPRISE

Musical notation for measures 36 and 39 of the first reprise. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 36 features a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 39 includes a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Star symbols are present in the bass staff of measures 36 and 39.

Musical notation for measures 46 and 47. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 46 features a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 47 includes a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Star symbols are present in the bass staff of measures 46 and 47.

Musical notation for measures 51 and 52. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 51 features a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 52 includes a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Star symbols are present in the bass staff of measures 51 and 52.

2<sup>e</sup> PETITE REPRISE

Musical notation for measures 53 and 54 of the second reprise. The system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 53 features a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Measure 54 includes a treble staff with eighth notes and a bass staff with quarter notes. Star symbols are present in the bass staff of measures 53 and 54.

## The slur concept in the late Baroque lute tablatures

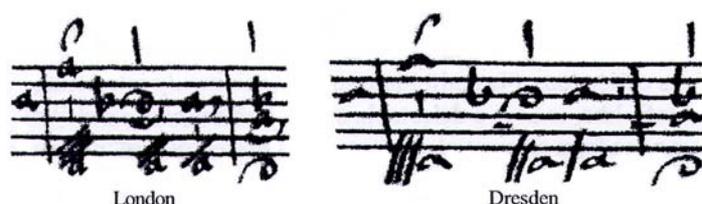
By Michel Cardin

In this article certain crucial points will be raised concerning the slurs in the late Baroque lute tablature music, an area of performance practice that remains enigmatic although players are always skeptical and puzzled about it. It is hoped that it could help them to gain insights into their use in music of the late Baroque. My concerns will be focused on S.L. Weiss and his fellow composers' music found in the Central Europe manuscripts of the 18th century. This kind of analysis could come to different conclusions with manuscripts of other places and other times. Looking in the future, it will be very interesting to have general analysis of compared slur calligraphies of all tablatures. I'm talking about calligraphy indeed, since although slurs are at first an instrumental and musical technique, they must be seen on the paper more as ornamental signs than representations of left hand articulations. My growing observations over the years took shape when practicing the three last solo sonatas of the London Manuscript by Weiss, with detailed comparison with the concordant sources.

We can begin an analysis of slur usage with the solo sonata no.24, WeissSW 30 by noting that in measure 14 of the minuet, slurs are obviously necessary. The question is: why are they present in the London ms but not in the Dresden one. The latter shows an as clean, carefully made copy, and it is not possible to consider these "optional"



At measure 19, 2nd beat, the inferior appoggiatura is perfectly drawn in London but much too far away at left in Dresden, misleading players by giving the impression of a slur between 1st and 2nd beats. This would make no sense since a bass occurs in the same time but a publisher following carefully the Dresden version and not being a lutenist could think it does.

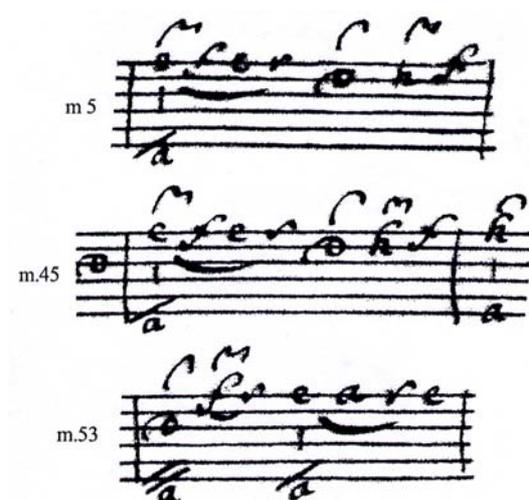


At measure 24, London again has a slur well placed between two notes, but Dresden has it much too far at right this time, giving the reverse impression of an appoggiatura. This happening on a sixteenth note, it wouldn't make sense either.

By the same token the London version of the sarabande contains a meticulous approach to the treatment of slurs whereas that of the Dresden ms seems less carefully contrived. Conversely, in a sonata such as no.8, WeissSW 12 it is the Dresden version that comes across as the more highly thought out. Why are there so huge differences? It would seem that, except for special cases, the slurs were of secondary importance to the actual notes in the 18th century lute repertoire, providing an optional, deliberately imprecise adjunct to the musical gesture, and were providing first and foremost an important contribution to the visual flow of the calligraphy. This would account for the different copying styles, with some copyists using infrequent slurring while others would garnish the manuscript with same. Still other copyists were prone to enormous calligraphic gestures that slurred only two notes while their colleagues would use the tiniest of ink curves to combine several notes, or, as seen in the previous example, neglect the sign positioning to the point of breaking the performance's logics in the sake of pure calligraphic elegance. This often leads to the modern habit, visually oriented as we are, of performing these slurs incorrectly, and indeed often in a manner completely at odds with the intention of the composer.

This is why one could say that modern editions of Baroque lute music, like the Peters London Ms, could have included corrections for slurs as well as for notes, rhythms, etc. Many slurs could have also been added, especially where they are obviously needed. Of course, this would have meant a long supplementary process, to be in hands of an active performer who must find solutions for a flowing, equilibrate playing, not a musicologist. This consciousness of interpretative necessity for slurs can be done only with a long term practice schedule and even if most of them (existing or to be added) can be easily dealt with, a good number will have to be relocated or reinvented, this with parsimony because personal taste is an inevitable part of the choice. This will bring in the future various editions with different slurring, just as for modern guitar transcriptions. And, yes, I do believe that one day new editions will put the emphasis on slurs in order to help amateurs or students, restrained as they are with continuous indecision about slurs. They read original tablatures without this remake, their playing being directly affected. This being said, as for advanced guitarists annoyed by abundant fingerings in guitar editions, these lute editions-with-precise-slurring will be of short concern for advanced lutenists, who will do their own adjustment work.

This topic can be expanded upon during discussions concerning the Allegro of the twenty-fifth solo sonata, WeissSW 31 (London only). Slur indications appear frequently at great distances from the musical notes (e.g.: four notes in meas.5, 45, 53) and it becomes difficult to know which ones should be "officially" grouped: the first three? The last three? All four? Only the middle two? But look how beautiful those slurs are. What a pleasure for the copyist to draw them with a nice pen !



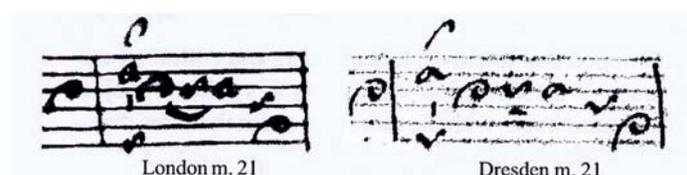
In fact, it seems that the copyist had no intention to indicate anything other than the general idea of a slur. In order to publish this music in modern notation, however, certain decisions must be taken, and somebody's choice remains one among other choices. Another publication of the same works will propose, partly, even without noticing discrepancies, different solutions. One can find a perfect example of this 'deliberate impreciseness' in the tablature notation of the Allegro. A certain passage (meas.2) returns in the second part (meas.26) without its slur, though it is clearly implied. At another point in the music (meas.24) three semi-quavers are slurred within a group of four, even though normal playing practice would indicate a preference for the logical, spontaneous grouping of all four. According to custom, this kind of precision would have been less important than the visual allure of the graphic design. Let's look carefully at the notes: a curve drawn under the four notes would have messed up the nice visual presentation simply because the bass note under the first of four would have been in the way:



Editors and non-professional lutenists are misled to think that what they see is what is real and they perpetuate wrong slurring. A lutenist might end up correcting these but not editors. The precision inherent in contemporary editing practices leads, inevitably, to a misleading presentation of the music since slurring decisions do not become tested through regular performance. These ambiguities will no doubt be clarified as more and more practicing lutenists embrace the problems of early notation. As yet another example of the indiscriminate use of slurring, the Allegro reveals at one point (meas.17) a three note slur which reappears superimposed on a two note grouping, in a very delicate way, following as always the first rule of elegant design.

It is equally important to resist the temptation to add slurs where they are not musically pertinent. One passage in the Bourree naturally needs a detached, slightly heavier approach, an effect that would be negated if rendered light and fluid through the use of slurs. One must not automatically think that the composer or copyist "forgot" to put slurs, and rather strive to resolve ambiguities within the direct sense of the musical discourse. For the gigue on the other hand, as for many others, we note the absolute necessity of providing more slurs than those indicated in a piece of this kind. This also leads one to believe that in this musical period slurs were treated similarly to figured bass notation, with great precision during certain passages of clear expressive import, but otherwise presented in a lackadaisical manner, leaving many decisions to the discretion of the performer. This can be once again compared to the modern guitarist's duty with fingerings and retranscription.

In the sonata no.26, WeissSW 32, here again a certain preoccupation with slurs becomes expedient. First in the Courante: in measures 21, 64 and 67, how many notes are intended to be slurred? Two? Three? (the Dresden manuscript is even less precise in this respect). As always, an interpretational judgement must be brought to the task.





London m.64-67



Dresden m.64-67

Now the Bourrée : there are almost no slur indications in the Wroclaw version. It is quite obvious that, aside from a few specific passages, it is unnatural to play the Baroque lute without slurring. As was the case in the gigue of the twenty-fifth sonata, it is incumbent on the performer to provide slurs for this piece. The Dresden version confirms the notion that calligraphic concerns took precedence over musical issues. In the London manuscript a large slur indication is traced, logically, under four notes while the Dresden ms shows a very tiny indication concerning only, it seems to be, the two middle notes. It must nevertheless, and this becomes obvious at 100% with lute in hands, concern all four. These calligraphic variations must have been routinely accepted and re-interpreted by performers of the time. This approach seems very distant to our time, living as we do with the high degree of notational precision demanded by composers since the nineteenth century.

The Sarabande was also more carefully edited in the London Manuscript, showing very sophisticated fingering and slurring indications. This is quite clear even from the beginning of the piece. I would hereby offer three supplemental hypotheses concerning slurring indications: 1) Written in ink, the occasional inadequate slur indication was not crossed out since it was considered to be less of an error than, say, a bad note. In any case, a probable repetition of a similar pattern later in the work would allow the copyist to offer an improved version. Frequent examples of this exist. 2) Given the inevitable slowing down of gesture (mentally or in performance) during the act of composing or copying, the choice of slurs becomes a bit more haphazard. This very slowness inhibits a precise articulation of proper slurring as would be found in a well-rehearsed performance. Indeed the normal tendency is to defer placing overly precise indications until such time as the piece becomes truly 'in the fingers'. 3) When the copying involved two persons, especially in faster pieces for which it was impossible to play faster than for a slow piece, the person performing could have deliberately avoided using liaisons to allow the copyist a chance to hear all the notes.

Working on many different sources often containing the same pieces brought me to this germ of an explanation. Indeed, how else could we explain this anarchy, this perpetual imprecision in slur indications, that are in the same time so elegant, so well rendered graphically?

It is hoped that lutenists, lute teachers and editors of Baroque lute music in staff notation will look at this delicate subject with detailed examination, with the same care as for the notes themselves, by looking for the hidden meanings of these tablature signs. This should help greatly the lute candidates, so far trying to untangle and manage the thing by themselves, without useful principles at the start.

Michel Cardin, Moncton 2001

